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ABSTRACT

This book is meant to be practical. It attempts to clarify what one should keep in mind and to describe what courses of action are open when one confronts a particular situation. It is stated that teachers and principals encounter discipline problems not because they are deficient in skill or in virtue, but because they have inherited misleading definitions of their respective roles. What schools must do, may do, and may not do about disciplining is a matter of the governing of children. Individual chapters deal with the legal bases for student governance; fundamentals of governance--definitions, norms, and influence measures; the application of norms and compliance devices to different situations; the principal's leadership role in the governance program; governance tasks that trouble teachers and how principals can help; the ways to talk with students when there has been trouble; major offenses; and some considerations in building a governance program. The appendixes provide a list of students' rights, a suggested list of important elemental norms for public elementary schools, and a list of basic influence procedures. (Author/IRT)

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Students' Rights and Discipline

EDWARD T. LADD
(with JOHN C. WALDEN)

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Foreword

This book has been long—tragically long—in the making. The need for a structured yet humane approach to student governance was apparent as early as 1971, when the editorial department of the National Association of Elementary School Principals first approached Edward Ladd with the request that he write such a book. The manuscript was undergoing final revision when Dr. Ladd was killed in an accident in 1973.

Dr. Ladd's notes were turned over to John Walden, who completed the task of revision and brought the manuscript up to date with respect to recent trends in school law.

Finally, we would like to say that without the devoted guidance and help of Maria Ladd, Dr. Ladd's widow, publication of this book would not have been possible.

The Editors
National Association of
Elementary School Principals

Preface

This book is meant to be practical. If it's not that, it's not a success. Student discipline is a pressing and serious problem for which school people urgently need all the help they can get.

Teachers are so greatly concerned about discipline that to dismiss the problem glibly or to moralize about trying harder just won't do. Furthermore, the fact that a very large part of the general public is extremely disturbed about discipline in the schools places school people under the heaviest pressure to develop better solutions to the problem. These concerns have at least a partial basis in fact. There is a significant amount of genuinely disruptive and dangerous behavior, even in elementary school.

Superficially, the dangers in elementary schools are less serious than those to be expected in secondary schools. But there is, if anything, a greater reason for dealing with them in the most professional way possible. It is in elementary schools that the young have their earliest extended experiences with organized society and formal rules and rights. It is there that they are most likely to develop lasting habits of mind and of behavior. It is important that when youngsters go on to secondary school, they be more than halfway prepared to function as the adult citizens they will soon afterward become.

Principals and teachers in public elementary and middle schools need answers to many different questions about discipline. Some can be found in a book, some cannot. No book can answer the question, "What should I do in this situation?" In order to help principals and teachers answer that question themselves, this book attempts to clarify what one should keep in mind and to describe what courses of action are open when one confronts a particular situation. It is in this sense that the book

is intended to be practical.

Principals and teachers encounter discipline problems not because they are deficient in skill or in virtue, but because they have inherited from an outdated tradition misleading definitions of their respective roles. The stress in this book, therefore, is on roles the principal and teacher may effectively play. I have tried to keep out more personal biases and opinions, so as to make what is offered as authoritative, scientific, and logical as possible. The insights into disciplinary tasks and ways of dealing with them that you find in this book sprang largely from my invaluable contacts with children and with practicing teachers and principals, to whom I owe a great debt.

As the reader will discover, the book takes its cue from the fact that our public schools are ultimately governmental institutions, established to achieve certain public purposes, given certain powers with which to act, and, like other governmental institutions in a free society under law, limited in certain ways as to what they may properly do. What schools must do, may do, and may not do about discipline is a matter of the governing of children. So the most helpful overall frame of reference for looking at the problem of discipline comes from the fields of political science and law. It is such a frame of reference that this book uses.

The academic aspects of the analysis are in part well authenticated by research and in part based on extrapolations from research. Some of the analysis needs, no doubt, to be refined or corrected. Many of the assertions should be hedged with such statements as "it appears," or "the evidence suggests," or "it seems reasonable to conclude," but to keep the book from being cumbersome, such phrases have been omitted. For information supporting any given statement, the reader is invited to examine the growing scholarly literature in the field and various of my own writings on discipline and students' rights.

Because the book is based on considerations that go beyond the day-to-day operation of a school to the broader question of the schools' fundamental purpose and place in our society, it might be thought of as being, in its own area, both a cookbook and a summary of the fundamentals of nutrition.

I hope, indeed, that the book will be useful in the following ways:

- ☐ As helpful reading for principals themselves
- ☐ As something to pass on to teachers who are concerned about discipline or responsible for it
- ☐ As a source of materials that may even be given to students who share in the governance of their schools
- ☐ As a basis for analysis and discussion at faculty meetings, inservice meetings, workshops, and college courses.

Edward T. Ladd

Legal Bases for Student Governance

Public school principals and teachers have legal responsibility for regulating the behavior of the students in their charge, and they have the legal authority to accomplish it. Both this responsibility and this authority exist by virtue of the constitutions and laws of the respective states and of the federal government. The question of how school officials should regulate student conduct is, therefore, partly a legal question.

The American legal system is a complex arrangement of agreements defining various rights of various people. The public school, which is part of the apparatus of government, has its own internal, quasi-legal system. The school's provisions for the governing of students can then be seen as provisions for safeguarding and implementing the rights of various people that may be affected by students' behavior or by what is done to regulate it.

In the behavior of students in a public elementary school, many rights of many people may be at stake. The whole citizenry has the right to have everyone in a school act in accord with the law. The people of the state under which the school has been established have the right to have school officials keep the prescribed educational program accessible to all the children of the community; and, what amounts to the same thing, the children have the right of access to an education. Everyone in the school and everyone affected by its program, including people who simply walk past the building, have the right not to be injured or endangered by students under the school's jurisdiction. Everyone in the school has certain constitutional rights, which other people, particularly those in legal authority, are required to respect. Finally, those who "own" the school building and its program, the general public, have a right to have them not put out of commission or damaged.

It would seem to be part of the job of public school administrators and teachers, the legal managers of the schools, to see to it that in their schools all of these kinds of rights are upheld as best they can be. But in this less-than-perfect world, the interests with which these rights are concerned sometimes conflict, and where one right ends and another begins is often unclear. Therefore, school people must determine in each situation the extent and the limits of each right. When there appears to be a conflict of interests, it is ultimately for the school officials to see to it that the proper balance is struck. The authority of administrators and teachers to discharge these obligations is of three kinds: 1) authority to set policies and make rules—a sort of legislative authority; 2) authority to formulate and implement regulations, to issue orders, and generally to bring about compliance with these policies, regulations, and orders—an executive authority; and 3) authority to deal with violations that have occurred and with other overt conflicts—a sort of judicial authority. That school personnel have authority of these various kinds doesn't mean, of course, that they have to exercise it themselves; to a considerable degree they are free to delegate it to one another and to students. It does mean, though, that they are ultimately responsible for the balancing of interests and upholding of rights, and that when they delegate their authority, they remain accountable for the professional character of that delegation.

What kinds of interests do various groups of people have in the discipline program of a public elementary school, and what kind of balance should be established between them? What rights, in other words, do different people have in such a program, and what are their respective limits?

Basically, the answers to these questions are to be found in the law. Many of the rights that concern the governance of students are stated or implied in state laws and local regulations. They tend to differ to some degree from one school district to another. Other rights are derived from federal law; even they, however, differ from place to place in these days when federal courts are in the process of defining and redefining the limits of various rights, particularly students' rights, in school settings. Sometimes courts have not agreed with each other on the same issue. What is said here isn't, therefore, a substitute for good legal counsel appropriate for the particular jurisdiction. Nor can it change the fact that, when the chips are down, anyone's legal rights are simply what a particular court says they are—that's how the pragmatic legal system of the United States works. Nevertheless, a number of fairly reliable generalizations can be made.

Since the very purpose of a public school is to educate, within it the public's *right to have education made accessible to students* and kept accessible to them, and the individual student's *right of access to an education* must be defined very broadly. This is the position taken in the Report of the 1970 White House Conference on Children:

> The child's basic right in school is access to a satisfactory education. Whatever a child's color, sex, race, class, marital status, physical condition, or behavior, he is and should be entitled to publicly supported educational services.[1]

Upholding this right within a school's program for regulating student conduct means at least three things.

First, it means that when some students are

disposed to behave in ways that would interfere with other students' access to education or with their efforts to learn, something must be done to see that they don't behave that way. Most of the governance activities in elementary schools today are aimed at protecting this right to an education by getting kids not to be noisy, disorderly, or disruptive.

Second, it means that disciplinary policies and practices themselves should allow education to go forward and not impede or injure it. That is, policies and practices should be followed whose effects on students' opportunities to learn and grow are at least neutral. This is a demanding requirement. The education to which a public school student is entitled includes not only instruction in the three Rs, but also education for adult citizenship in a complex society. From the time the student enrolls in school to the time he reaches the age of eighteen, he must have a chance to develop a special collection of notions and feelings, skills and habits, concerning freedom, law and order, and how to be a citizen in a democratically self-governing society.

Just after birth only a tiny amount of the power over a child's life is in his own hands; the vast majority of it is in the hands of the adults who have charge of him. When he reaches adulthood in a democratic society, a large amount of the power over his life will be in his own hands, and the rest of it, also a large amount, will be in the hands of a government in which he is ultimately an equal partner.

It is often said that part of education for citizenship is teaching children to learn to accept limits. In one sense such teaching is unnecessary: whenever limits are real, a child cannot help learning to accept them, as, for instance, he cannot help learning to accept the limits imposed by the law of gravity. What the aphorism is intended to convey, presumably, is that children must learn reasons for setting limits to their own behavior themselves and develop skill in doing this. This is true enough. These are things that children do not learn by watching adults who have power over their lives set limits for them, manipulate them, or control the consequences of what they do. To learn these things, children must act for themselves in practical settings; they must experience the real, natural consequences of various forms of self-indulgence and self-direction, apart from artificial intervention from the outside; and they must weigh the advantages and disadvantages of various kinds of courses of action. They learn how to be citizens in a democracy only by acting in part as free individuals and in part as citizens working with other citizens through democratic governance structures.

The prerequisites of education for citizenship include giving the growing student increasing freedom and an increasing share in group decision making for the governance of his own life and the lives of the rest of his group. He will be able to use adult freedom intelligently only if he has learned self-discipline; that is, has learned to set limits to his behavior, or, to put it yet another way, to voluntarily forego exercising part of the freedom allowed him. But the only way he can learn to do this is to experiment both with exercising certain freedoms fully and with giving some of them up voluntarily, and to find that often the latter is in the long run more rewarding. The first prerequisite for such learning, then, is that he be allowed those freedoms and allowed to experience the consequences of using them either way. Similarly, only through successful firsthand ex-

perience in democratic self-government can the student learn how to participate intelligently in that process, which also involves, among other things, giving up some freedom.

If the goal is to be reached, the rate of increase has to be steady and steep. Generally speaking, the process should go forward regardless of whether the student has fully mastered his earlier lessons, for it has to be completed as far as possible by the time he reaches eighteen and becomes a citizen, ready or not. Any disciplinary measures that prevent children from becoming freer year by year or from sharing more and more in group self-governance interfere with the process and thus have adverse educational side effects.

If the family, preschool, elementary school, and secondary school fulfill their respective educational tasks, the right of education for citizenship will be ensured. When any one of them falls short, however, as is frequently the case, that right is infringed. If the failure is apparent before the child has completed elementary school, the elementary school has an extra, remedial job to do. It must start with him where he is, and together with the high school it must, if humanly possible, take him to the defined goal: readiness for adult citizenship. This will require a crash program. The school's governance program—its disciplinary policies and practices—should be such as not to interfere with this crash remedial program.

The third implication for discipline is related to the second, but goes further. It is the presumed right of school-age children not to have their education interrupted for any long period of time, let alone brought to an end, a right that obviously has an important bearing on the subject of suspensions. This presumed right will be discussed below.

It is clear that in designing school disciplinary practices, the interest of the public, the student himself, and his parents in his receiving an education should be given a high priority in relation to other interests. It is certainly more important than protecting the school building from wear and tear and perhaps even more important than protecting students and school officials from risk of minor injury.

The student's right to an education should not have top priority, however. Sometimes a risk is serious, and there is an imminent danger of real injury to a person or a valuable piece of property. Even if learning has to wait, people have a right to be protected and to have their valuable possessions—including the school—protected from danger. For elementary school children, indeed, the right to personal protection would seem to be particularly important, since they may be less able to defend and care for themselves than are, for instance, school personnel; and, in any case, they are in school under compulsion rather than by choice. Assuming that serious dangers can be dealt with rather quickly, to subordinate students' interest in an education to their interest in being protected from real dangers doesn't violate their right to an education, for obtaining an education isn't a matter of now or never, but can be accomplished later.

What school officials do to protect people and property, and other regulatory activities they engage in that don't relate directly to learning, constitute a function that schools share with other organizations that care for the well-being of people temporarily in their keeping. A leading student of school law has called this the school's "host function."[2] What has been said so far suggests that aspects of the host function that deal with serious dan-

gers should take precedence over a student's education, while less important aspects should be subordinated to it.

Many rights of individuals are more or less explicitly guaranteed to everyone by the federal Constitution. Since 1943 it has been the law, as interpreted by the U.S. Supreme Court, that schoolchildren share in those rights:

> The Fourteenth Amendment, as now applied to the States, protects the citizen against the State itself and all of its creatures—Boards of Education not excepted. These have, of course, important, delicate, and highly discretionary functions, but none that they may not perform within the limits of the Bill of Rights. That they are educating the young for citizenship is reason for scrupulous protection of constitutional freedom of the individual.[3]

In recent years the federal courts have been busily interpreting the practical meaning of this principle as regards school disciplinary practices, often disagreeing with one another, but in large measure agreeing.

Some of the constitutional rights to which students in public elementary school are entitled can be protected—or violated—through the school's pattern of policies, rules, and regulations, including both those laid down by school officials themselves and those adopted by students to whom that power has been delegated. Two such rights are the *rights to privacy* and *to be let alone* (a phrase used by the U.S. Supreme Court) whenever there is no good reason for the school to bother the child. The latter right overlaps, of course, with the right of a child to have protection from harassment by other children, as well as by school personnel. The exact legal limits of these rights in school are still undefined, partly because school people give courts different reports as to what is necessary for keeping order.

Students also have a *right to equal treatment*, treatment without arbitrary racial, sexual, or ethnic discrimination, or indeed any kind of discrimination that has no fair and reasonable purpose. A school rule or policy can, in fact, be discriminatory without being intended to be. It may discriminate against either boys or girls on purely traditional grounds, or it may subject children of one group to more stringent demands than their classmates. Where desegregation involving cultural, ethnic, or religious groups has taken place, there may be real systematic differences in behavior among the groups. But such differences are likely to stem originally from historical, government supported injustices, so schools may be required by law to modify their practices in order to protect minority students' *right to have injury done by past discrimination redressed*. In such situations, blind attempts to force a uniform standard of behavior may be discriminatory in their effect.

Students' *right to freedom of religion*—and of nonreligion—overlaps with their right to equal treatment, but it goes further and rules out any efforts to educate them about "good behavior" that have a religious or quasi-religious character.

Students have the rights to *freedom of speech, freedom of expression of ideas,* and *freedom of the press* within reasonable limits on the manner, times, and places that these freedoms are exercised, and short of obscenity or serious injury to persons. In general, school policies and practices may not otherwise interfere with the content of what is said, with the exception that when schools subsidize publications and are thus the legal publishers, they may censor out material that

violates other rights they are committed to uphold. Also, schools may not require students to say things they do not believe, such as prayers or the Pledge of Allegiance. Not only may schools not punish or discomfort students for exercising any of these rights, but they are obligated to see to it that the school adopts whatever rules and requirements are necessary to enable students to exercise them.

The U.S. Supreme Court has said that:

> The Nation's future depends upon leaders trained through wide exposure to that robust exchange of ideas which discovers truth "out of a multitude of tongues, [rather] than through any kind of authoritative selection."

and also that:

> A student . . . may express his opinions, even on controversial subjects . . . if he does so "without materially and substantially interfering with appropriate discipline in the operation of the school" and without colliding with the rights of others.

Finally, on the subject of school rules and regulations, one should mention students' right to be subjected to only such rules, regulations, and orders as have some reasonable promise of helping to get done the job the school is called on to do. This right not to be subjected to purely arbitrary or capricious or vindictive demands may be described as the *right of substantive due process*. In other words, the school may not promulgate rules that infringe on rights guaranteed an individual by the U.S.—or his state's—Constitution. Although this is not always recognized in practice, students have in principle the right to disobey any improper order from a principal or teacher. In other words, a student's refusal to obey an order is an offense only if the order is a legitimate one.

So much for the rights at stake in school rules and requirements. Let us turn now to those at stake in the practices a school chooses to use for bringing about compliance with its rules and requirements. These include other rights, rights to various forms of protection that must be afforded individuals who are suspected or accused of offenses. It is a right of each student that school authorities will pursue misbehavior in such a way as to promise to establish fairly anyone's guilt or innocence of an offense — the general *right to procedural due process*. Also, a student who is found guilty has a right to be protected from undue punishment. Although the constitutional guarantees of such rights were intended for persons accused in criminal cases, the same rights exist, with some modifications, in disciplinary cases in schools, particularly where charges may lead to such serious penalties as a suspension for more than a few days or a disciplinary transfer.

One aspect of procedural due process for students is their *right to be presumed innocent* until their guilt is established beyond a reasonable doubt. Thus, a whole group of students may not be penalized for the misbehavior of only one or some of its members.

Students have the *right to remain silent* when they are or may be accused of behavior that is illegal; for this reason, any confession of such behavior made to a school official is probably inadmissible in court as evidence against the student. Whether students have the same right in regard to violations of internal school rules in general and if so, under what conditions, is not clear.

The school's and its students' *rights to be secure from improper searches and seizures* preclude the conduct of searches on school grounds by the police without either permis-

sion or a warrant. School officials, on the other hand, may conduct searches when they have good, specific reasons to, and perhaps when they merely have general suspicions—on this the law is not clear. School officials may confiscate objects that are dangerous or are the occasions of improper behavior; they are probably obligated to return such objects to the students concerned or their parents, or, if they are contraband, to turn them over to the police.

Students have the *right not to be punished except as an outcome of a fair procedure,* which, insofar as the penalty is serious, must approach formal due process of law. Important rules and regulations should be published in explicit language before any offense against them is committed, so that students know in advance what is and what is not punishable; vague rules, such as prohibitions on "unbecoming conduct," "extreme dress styles," or "bad attitudes" are very questionable. Students must have opportunities to defend themselves against charges and must not be suspended for very long (opinions as to how long this is range from two days to more than ten) without a fair and proper hearing.[4]

Punishments must not, of course, violate students' *right to freedom from racial, religious, and sex discrimination.* Punishments should not be imposed unfairly on one particular group. Like rules and regulations, punishments may, intentionally or unintentionally, be discriminatory. If, indeed, in a given school only black students were suspended and the suspensions were challenged in court, there would be a heavy burden on school officials to show that racial discrimination had not entered into the picture.

There is a constitutional *right not to be subjected to cruel and unusual punishment.* Since this particular right has been the basis of very few legal challenges to school disciplinary practices, principals and teachers may have to rely on their own best judgment as to what is cruel and unusual. In the past, paddling a child has not been defined legally as "cruel and unusual"; in fact, most states still authorize school boards to permit corporal punishment, and some give them no choice but to do so. (By January 1973, however, two states and many individual school districts had banned corporal punishment altogther.) The practice of administering corporal punishment to students is under attack in the courts and may one day be universally outlawed, although no court has yet done so.

As was suggested above, it would seem to be a violation of the public's, the student's, and his parents' *right to have each child of school age given an education* if a student were excluded from school for any length of time, however serious his offense might have been. For many years, courts have permitted school officials to suspend students of school age for weeks and even expel them, and most courts still do. The belief is growing, however, that such practices violate the rights of both the public—which, in its own interest, instituted the schools and made attendance at them compulsory—and of the individual student—who may need education more than do his better-behaved schoolmates. The 1970 White House Conference Report had this to say:

> No child should be excluded, expelled, or suspended from such services for more than a few days unless alternative provisions for his education are arranged.[5]

Courts of law seem to be moving toward the same position.

Students also have a *right to be protected against unfair, damaging entries in their permanent records*. In this connection, parents have the right to inspect their children's records. Apart from that, students have a right to have their records kept confidential. Students have, too, the *right to an academic transcript based on achievement*, and not on behavior or presumed attitudes.

Besides these rights, students have, of course, whatever other legal rights have been granted them by legislatures, state and local school boards, and other officials. For example, in at least one school district, students are legally protected from sarcasm by teachers. In some they are granted rights to share in the running of the schools. Local and state codes of students' rights are multiplying rapidly.

It is important to remember the fundamental characteristic of these rights. Students are not required to do anything in order to be entitled to their rights. The Report of the White House Conference pointed this out:

> As in the case of children's rights in general, the rights which children have in school do not have to be earned. Their exercise is the child's privilege even if his judgment is poor, or if he is ill-informed, ill-mannered, or has contributed little or nothing to his class, school, or society.[6]

As the Conference Report also said:

> Because the state compels children to attend school, because children are relatively weak and easily coerced, and because school is the societal institution with which children have their first close contact, it is especially important that the school honor children's rights and recognize the primacy of their interests.[7]

Since children, especially younger ones, are often unable to stand up for their own rights, their parents must often represent them—either informally or legally. In this sense, parents can be thought of as sharing their children's rights vis-à-vis the schools. Of course, parents also have certain rights of their own at stake in schools, related to their right to bring up their children as they deem best. On this basis, one federal court has held that a child's parents have the legal right to veto the inflicting of physically violent punishment on him.

While the rights we have listed are the main ones to be considered in designing a school's governance program, others may need to be taken into account as well. Not only do a few states have explicit laws granting teachers the right to take certain kinds of disciplinary measures, as has been suggested, but in some school districts, collective bargaining agreements have created rights for teachers and teachers' organizations that concern discipline.

In the last analysis it is up to courts, rather than school officials, to determine the limits of various rights that appear to conflict. When courts become involved in balancing rights in disciplinary matters, it is usually as a result of law suits brought by parents. Nothing can stop a parent from suing when he wants to; it is everyone's right to sue. Parents often sue to have a suspension overruled. Sometimes, too, they sue for damages. In 1970, a principal rather unmercifully harassed a boy who had disobeyed a school rule and was sued for, and required to pay, damages.

A suit either to overturn a school's disciplinary action or to obtain damages from a school official presumably will be won only if the judge or jury finds that a right has been infringed. Judges, in particular, will generally respect school officials' opinions as to what balance of interests respects the rights of all

concerned, and will generally let them do whatever can reasonably be regarded as suitable for accomplishing what the school is supposed to accomplish. Ordinarily, in other words, courts will overrule school officials' actions only if those officials seem to be trying to do something they lack the authority to do, or when the measures they use are quite unreasonable or violate constitutional rights. But since defining rights precisely is a matter of exercising human judgment, what judges and juries will say is not entirely predictable, and a principal's or a teacher's view of what is a suitable way to balance interests and uphold rights will sometimes be overruled. This is a risk of the profession, perhaps. But it can almost always be avoided if the school official tries to be aware of the various interests at stake and tries to keep them in balance. The more successfully he can do that, the better position he will be in to discharge his governance obligations satisfactorily.[8]

NOTES

1. *Report of the White House Conference on Children, 1970* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1970).
2. Stephen R. Goldstein, "The Scope and Sources of School Board Authority to Regulate Student Conduct and Status: A Nonconstitutional Analysis," *University of Pennsylvania Law Review* 117 (January 1969): 373-430.
3. *West Virginia State Board of Education* v. *Barnette*, 319 U.S. 624 (1943).
4. A good manual on this subject is Robert E. Phay, *Suspension and Expulsion of Public School Students*, No. 3 in the NOLPE Monograph Series (Topeka: National Organization on Legal Problems of Education, 1971). School administrators are also advised to study the implications of the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Goss* v. *Lopez* (January 1975), which requires due process in cases of expulsion and suspension.
5. *White House Conference on Children, 1970.*
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. A good introduction to the current literature on school discipline is Dee Schofield, *Student Rights and Student Discipline*, School Leadership Digest No. 13 (Arlington, Va.: National Association of Elementary School Principals, 1975).

Fundamentals of Governance: Definitions, Norms, and Influence Measures

Fundamental to any student governance program are its legal bases, discussed in Chapter 1, and its basic norms, influence measures, and compliance devices that undergird the entire program. Every control technique has its roots in one or several of the more fundamental elements of the governance program that will be discussed in this chapter. A basic purpose of this chapter is to clarify the nature of these elements: norms, influence measures, and compliance devices. In addition, attention is given to the problem school personnel frequently have with communicating what they mean when they talk about "children respecting adults," "classroom control," "permissive atmosphere" and other commonly used terms.

PROBLEMS WITH DEFINITIONS

Consider the very words generally used by people who talk about discipline. The basic vocabulary is so full of ambiguities that, unless one defines what he means by the words used most often, misunderstanding is inevitable. Even worse, perhaps, ambiguous terms invite people to switch meanings in the middle of their lines of reasoning, and they thus end up misleading themselves.

The word "respect," for example, which is constantly used in conversations about school discipline, has three distinct meanings: 1) evidences of restraint or considerateness in dealings with other people, as in, "Regardless of your feelings about one another, I insist that you show respect for each other"; 2) one person's opinion of another person's power to have his way, or the other person's power rating or prestige, as in, "After I sent that boy to the office, the class seemed to have more respect for me," or "Since punishing them, I have their respect"; and 3) high regard for someone, as in, "I really came to respect that

boy." Every member of a school is entitled to respect in the first sense, and teachers, principals, and student leaders need, but must earn or inherit, a degree of respect in the second sense. No one is automatically entitled to respect in the third sense, but if anyone is to have it, as every teacher should, he or she must earn it by displaying qualities other people value. The three meanings are so different that the constant use of the term "respect" without definition almost proves that our thinking is confused. And as long as we continue to use the word this way, we are unlikely to understand the subject.

Consider the word "responsible." It, too, has three meanings: 1) mature or wise, as in, "Carol is very responsible"; 2) having prerogative or authority, as in, "I'll let you be responsible for deciding that entirely by yourself"; and 3) accountable to someone else, as in, "I'm holding you responsible for doing this right." Such a statement as "children must learn to be responsible" uses the word in the first sense; the way to bring this situation about is to permit children to be responsible in the second sense. To make them responsible in the third sense may not accomplish that end, and may even interfere with it. That is, children cannot become responsible in the first sense of the term until they have enjoyed responsibility in the second sense. To expect children to learn responsibility in the abstract is futile. It is rather like expecting an athlete to become skillful in a sport without ever permitting him to play the game.

The word "permissive" has two distinct meanings: 1) the rules and requirements are very liberal (though they may be firmly enforced), as in "That school is very permissive; students call the teachers by their first names"; and 2) the enforcing of rules is lax, as in "The kids aren't supposed to chew gum, but that teacher is so permissive that he lets them."

"Strict," when applied to a person, has two similar meanings and a third one: 1) his rules are restrictive as in, "Mr. X is very strict; he doesn't allow his children to chew gum"; 2) the person enforces to the hilt whatever rules there are, as in, "Mr. Y has hardly any rules, but he is strict about the ones he has"; and 3) aloof, unfriendly, as in, "Mr. Z is so strict he never smiles."

"Democratic" has at least two meanings: 1) humane, kind, and considerate, as in, "He's a very democratic principal"; and 2) self-governing, as in, "We have machinery for making certain decisions democratically by secret ballot." A principal who says he is committed to operating democratically, using the word in the first sense, may mislead himself into thinking that he is being democratic in the second sense. He is not likely to mislead teachers or students, however, who will probably think him hypocritical.

The word "freedom" suffers from the same weakness. It can mean: 1) being able to do anything one is disposed to do, as in, "He believes in complete freedom for his fourth-graders"; or 2) being able to do what one is disposed to do within limits, as in, "Freedom doesn't mean license." Principals and teachers are likely to use the term in the second sense, while students use it more often in the first sense. Some people who talk and write about discipline do not even appear to see the difference.

The various meanings of the word "discipline" itself have been pointed out often, and for most writers on the subject the word has come to stand only for the subject of regulating student conduct in general. Some practitioners, however, still use it to mean "pun-

ish." Many people see it as a term for the overcoming of all that is evil, but many others see it as a dirty word. Because the word has connotations that some educators dislike, many people substitute the term "control."

"Control," however, is also ambiguous. It can mean: 1) complete power over something, as in "A driver should always have control over his car"; or 2) partial power over something to the extent necessary for a certain purpose, as in, "Ms. X allows her students a lot of freedom, but she has the necessary control." Some principals and teachers, recognizing the need for control over students in the second sense, believe this means they must achieve control in the first sense. To do so is to invite rebellion.

Because of the ambiguities in all these terms, they usually cause more trouble than they are worth to anyone closely examining the problem of the governing of students and trying to separate out its different elements. In general, therefore, they shall be avoided in the analysis and recommendations in this book—and others, too, might be wise to do the same.

A number of more helpful concepts and terms are suggested by the fact that regulating schoolchildren's behavior is a matter of exercising legal authority, a matter of governance. Using these terms may improve our understanding of the subject.

Above all, one must make the distinction between three different disciplinary concerns: norms, compliance devices, and apparatuses for governance.

NORMS

The first concern is that of defining the kinds of behavior that will be required, encouraged, allowed, discouraged, or forbidden. The decisions made in a school about which kinds of student behavior are to be placed in each of those categories can be thought of as decisions about *norms*, using the term somewhat differently, of course, from the way sociologists usually use it. Norms can apply to any kind of overt behavior; indeed, school people sometimes try to make them apply to attitudes, as in, "Something has to be done about that girl's attitude."

Some kinds of behavior are simply not allowed at all. Other kinds may be viewed as a nuisance but, under certain circumstances at least, are tolerated. Some kinds of behavior are simply not of disciplinary concern. Some kinds are encouraged by school authorities but not required, and some kinds are required. Thus, the norms in a given school can be arranged on two scales: the negative ones, from the most important through the less important, ending with the behaviors to which the norms don't apply; and the affirmative ones, from the least important through those of more and more importance, ending with the mandatory ones. How important a particular norm is in a given situation has a bearing on what should be done about the possibility of students' not complying with it. And whether it is an affirmative norm or a negative one may have a good deal to do with whether a particular measure aimed at bringing about compliance with it is likely to be effective.

Another way of distinguishing between norms is based on how they are intended to serve their purpose. Some norms are aimed at serving governance purposes directly; in other words, it is presumed that when students comply with the norms, the right at stake is automatically ensured. Norms that call on students to refrain from setting build-

ings on fire, to refrain from attacking people with weapons, to refrain from bothering others at their work, to be courteous enough to facilitate good human relations, and not to buck the lunch line, for example, call for behavior that contributes directly to the upholding of the rights of people in the school or connected with it. They define requirements and restrictions that serve governance purposes directly. Norms of this kind can be called *elemental* norms. By definition, an elemental norm cannot properly be dispensed with unless it appears that the connection between the behavior and the right at stake doesn't exist after all, or at least isn't very important.

Norms, on the other hand, that call on students to refrain from bringing weapons to school, or to be silent during their lunch, or to stay out of the hallways while other students are at their studies define behaviors that don't directly relate to anyone's rights but do so, presumably, indirectly. Because bringing weapons to school doesn't per se injure anyone, forbidding it doesn't per se provide protection, but it does create a situation in which the really injurious behavior (that is, the using or discharging of the weapon) is less likely to occur. Norms that define behaviors that are presumed to serve governance purposes indirectly can be called *instrumental norms*. One of the typical characteristics of instrumental norms is that they are not indispensable: usually such a norm can be dropped and its work done by another, or by some entirely different device. More will be said about instrumental norms below.

This brings us to a second disciplinary concern: choosing and using devices or practices for influencing students to comply with the norms.

COMPLIANCE DEVICES

The number of specific kinds of things one can do to influence students to comply with norms (what can be called compliance devices) is huge. One class of experienced teachers, working for one class period with no advance notice, drew up a list of over one hundred, some being broad categories of measures, such as "adopting a more interesting curriculum"; some very specific, such as "keeping the student after school ten minutes"; some applicable in many situations; and some only in very specialized ones.

Compliance devices are of two general kinds. One is *instrumental norms*, which we have just mentioned: added rules or requirements that are instituted to make it more likely that students will comply with the norm one is really concerned with. The other is various forms of direct action, what one may call *influence measures*.

An influence measure is an overt step that the would-be influencer of someone else's behavior takes to achieve that purpose. Giving an order, making a request, smiling, instituting a new curriculum, redecorating the building, and creating an effective student council are examples. If the measure works, it is because it makes use of at least one basic process or procedure that has potential for influencing behavior. The relationship between measures and what we can call *basic influence procedures* is analogous to that between prescriptions and the drugs used in them: the procedures make the measures effective. Many procedures are familiar to everyone, including making promises and threats, rewarding, punishing, providing relevant information, and giving psychotherapy. There are a good many others, but in comparison with the indefinitely

large number of possible influence measures, the number of basic influence procedures is relatively small.

Just as a given prescription may contain a single drug or a number of different ones, an influence measure may use a single basic influence procedure or a number of them in combination. For example, a remark or even a series of facial expressions may communicate to a student information about possible objective consequences of a behavior, reassurance that one likes him or her (a form of promise), and a stimulus to examine his own motives (a bit of psychotherapy).

Basic influence procedures tend—again, like drugs—to work in characteristic ways and have characteristic kinds of effects. Thus the procedures used by a measure will tend to determine the kinds of consequences the measure will have, and in any given situation some measures will work better than others. When several procedures are combined in a measure, the measure is likely to have a complex of effects. In fact, sometimes for better and sometimes for worse, the effects caused by one procedure may mask or block out the effects or side effects of another.

Influence measures may be used to influence behavior not only directly but indirectly —in at least two ways: 1) obviously, rather than making use of a basic procedure oneself, one may often mobilize someone else, perhaps even the student or students in question, to do so; and 2) one may use a measure to influence students to engage in, or refrain from, behaviors that stand in certain kinds of relationships to the behaviors with which one is really concerned. Thus, when one's goal is to get students to behave in one certain way, one may influence them to engage in another behavior that is a prerequisite to the first behavior or is conducive to it, or to refrain from a behavior that is incompatible with it. If it's a matter of getting a student to refrain from a certain behavior, one may influence him to refrain from a behavior that is a necessary prerequisite to it, or is conducive to it, or to engage in a behavior that is incompatible with it. These various kinds of related behaviors can be called *instrumental behaviors*. To define such a behavior as desirable or undesirable on a regular basis is, of course, to create an instrumental norm. Sometimes one specific routine behavior has a tendency to lead to another, which in turn tends to lead to another, and so on. In such a situation instrumental norms may be linked together in chains.

The instrumental requirements and norms seem to fall into four categories.

All schools have as an elemental norm that children not fight with knives. To get children to comply with it, however, they institute different instrumental norms: some don't allow children to remove knives from their pockets while at school, others don't allow them to bring knives to school at all, and others ban knives of a certain type; still others have no instrumental norms for this purpose but allow the elemental norm to stand by itself. While the student behavior with which such rules deal doesn't in and of itself affect governance purposes one way or another, it is directly geared to fostering, or preventing, behavior that would, and that is therefore embodied in an elemental norm. Such rules thus illustrate what we may call *directly instrumental norms*.

The second category is illustrated by the requirement that children address a male teacher as "Mr.," as well as by most general dress and haircut requirements where they still exist. Norms of this kind are not elemental or central to the school's business, but

they are intended to have a psychological effect on children, making them generally more tractable and more disposed to do what the school wants them to do. They can be called *servility-promoting norms*.

Some instrumental requirements are laid on students as part of an influence procedure, most often a punishment. The requirement that under certain circumstances students stay after school is a good example. When such requirements are made into standing rules, they become, in effect, instrumental norms. Such norms we may call *norms incidental to influence measures*.

Finally, getting students to do things together that are aimed directly at helping bring about compliance with norms—including helping in the setting of instrumental norms and participating in student self-governing bodies; in other words, involving students in governance processes—can contribute to compliance with elemental norms. Norms calling for such involvement in disciplinary or governance matters on a routine or required basis can be called *political norms*.

Instrumental norms of these four kinds have one important characteristic in common: almost always the purpose of any given one can also be served, sometimes not quite so effectively, sometimes more so, by any of several others or by influence measures. Thus, few specific instrumental norms are indispensable. A great deal of the concern about student conduct in the typical school focuses, by the way, on instrumental rather than elemental norms.

With a sizeable number of basic procedures to put to work, an enormous number of possible measures through which to do this, and the further possibility of using instrumental norms, the number of possible ways of influencing students' behavior is very great indeed. For any given situation, however, the possibilities may be limited. It would take a large volume to explore even the most obvious possibilities and the kinds of situations in which they might or might not fit. Here we can only touch on some of the factors to consider. The advantages and drawbacks that various influence measures and instrumental norms will have in any given situation will depend on several kinds of characteristics they may have, some of which depend on the situation itself. Here is a summary of the most important characteristics.

Some devices can be used effectively only when certain conditions are given: they are *dependent on prerequisite conditions*. If a teacher is to forestall students' stealing by locking up her purse, she needs a lock for her desk. Rewarding students for desired behavior requires that one know what they like; tangible rewards require supplies that cost a little money; and a "free-time" room requires that the space be available. Also, for rewards to be used, the students must already have engaged in the desired behavior or a reasonable facsimile of it. If one is to punish a student, one must know what he really dislikes, and he must have engaged in an unwanted behavior. (Punishment can hardly be used effectively with children to correct sins of omission.) Measures that involve communicating to students what will happen or what one will do depend on the user's having an image as one whose predictions, promises, or threats are to be taken seriously. One might speak of the respective prerequisites as credibility, goodwill rating, and fearsomeness. A political instrumental norm can be used only insofar as students have learned certain group behavior skills and have appropriate leadership. These are just a few examples.

Devices are *compatible or incompatible with students' individual rights.* As was discussed in Chapter 1, only those that are compatible may properly be used. Thus, however effective it might be in influencing children's conduct, a principal's prying into their private or family affairs, which is generally a violation of their right to privacy, is not permissible. The kinds of devices most likely to entail violations of students' rights—measures that involve punishment and servility-promoting instrumental norms—need to be examined closely from this point of view. Also, if a device is to be compatible with the students' right of access to an education, it must be free of any tendency to harm their educational development. It used to be generally believed that restricting children's freedom and treating them harshly was good for them. This view has found no support in modern psychological study; on the contrary, there is abundant evidence that restrictiveness and harshness usually retard development.[1] Some forms of discipline, though, can be educational, and others can be essentially neutral, or, to use Fritz Redl's term, antiseptic.[2] School officials have an obligation, clearly, to choose compliance devices that are educationally antiseptic or helpful.

Since influence measures that develop negative attitudes toward authority or toward school officials and other adults are counter-educational, they are, wherever possible, to be avoided. If they are used, it should be as an exception rather than as a general rule. Obviously, this means threats and punishments above all. Used over a period of time, threats and punishments also tend to have the counter-educational effects of lowering students' self-concepts and self-confidence and discouraging the initiative, experimenting, and exploring on which learning ultimately depends. Threats and punishments tend to have the further harmful side effect of turning students' attention away from the question of the real goodness or badness of the behavior itself to the questions whether the adult approves or disapproves of it, whether he is likely to detect it, and how he will respond—thus delaying the student's developing of independent judgment. There is research indicating that threats and punishments produce anxiety and other disturbances in students other than those at whom they are directed just as they do in their recipients. Only one form of punishment may be useful and noninjurious: punishment that works not through causing pain, but through communicating to students that the punishing authority simply will not tolerate the behavior in question.

Promising and rewarding avoid these negative attitudinal effects—indeed, the attitudes they produce are favorable—but they share the tendency to limit students' independence. As Jerome Bruner has put it:

> Often . . . emphasis upon reward and punishment, under the control of an outside agent such as a teacher . . . diverts attention away from success and failure. In effect, this may take the learning initiative away from the child and give it to the person dispensing the rewards and punishments. . . . One of the great problems in teaching . . . is to give the rewarding function back to the learner and the task.[3]

Influencing students by giving them information, especially information pointing to the substantive advantages and disadvantages of various kinds of behavior, tends to teach them something about the way the world works, which is educational, as well as giving them a favorable view of authority and of the particular adult. And influencing students by stimu-

lating them to think obviously tends to have good educational side effects.

Servility-promoting norms tend, because of their effects on students' self-concepts, to be particularly damaging both to the students they affect directly and to others on whom their impact is indirect.

Political norms—involving students in self-governance practices—may be damaging if they are instituted too precipitately or without adequate help from more experienced persons, but they are so central an educational procedure that to fail to include them in a governance program would be to infringe on the student's right to education.

Moving on to another kind of characteristic compliance devices may have: they can be *efficacious* in varying degrees and in different ways. A measure or an instrumental norm can be efficacious in three ways: reliably, rapidly, and persistently (that is, so that the results last).

The reliability of a device is the certainty with which it will produce the intended results. In general, those procedures that put the onus of deciding what to do on the student tend to be less reliable. On the other hand, those that leave students no options other than to do what is wanted are obviously completely reliable; punishment, whatever its other drawbacks, does tend to be highly, though far from entirely, reliable with children, as do other procedures that arouse strong feelings. The reliability of a particular measure is often a reflection of the strength with which it is brought to bear; for instance, the severity of the punishment, the size of the reward offered, or the intensity of the educational effort brought to bear.

A device's rapidity of effect also depends on the intensity with which the device is brought to bear. In the case of measures that say something about the future, like predictions, promises, and threats, the closer the events seem to be in time, the more rapid the effect is likely to be. Continuous punishment tends to be quick acting if the child understands that it will end as soon as he complies. All procedures that hinge on students' weighing complex considerations or changing beliefs they have held for a long time, however, tend to be slow acting. Political instrumental norms are also likely to be somewhat slow acting.

The persistence of a device's effects has to be judged in relation to the particular norm. In some cases, bringing about compliance with the norm for an hour can be regarded as a very persistent effect; in other cases, one wants the effects to last for months or years. The more important the norm, the longer the period over which we are likely to want compliance to persist. In important matters, elementary school principals might use as a measure of persistence the degree to which their efforts have led their former students as a group to be mature and self-disciplined when they are in high school. In general, the more reliable procedures are the less persistent, simply because reliable measures keep in the influencer's hands the decision as to whether the student will comply and hence keep him from learning to make that decision for himself. Measures that depend on the consequences students' behavior have for them, either pleasant or unpleasant, are likely to be persistent to the extent that the consequences themselves persist. If the consequences are "real" or natural, the measures are likely to be persistent, but if the consequences are created by the would-be influencer, as rewards and punishments are, ordinarily those measures must be kept up. Rewards must be continual enough to be convincing; punishments must be almost continu-

ous as long as the noncomplying behavior lasts —except when they are so severe as to be traumatic. Among the most persistent devices, if they are effective at all, are those that provide students with information of various kinds, including information about options and their natural consequences, and those that engage students in making decisions about long-term costs and benefits and psychotherapy. Political instrumental norms, too, are likely to be persistent.

It is interesting to note that the most reliably and rapidly effective devices tend to be the least persistent ones, and vice versa. This suggests that school people who want a high level of compliance with elemental norms in the long run should expect to experience a good deal of noncompliance in the short run, while they are bringing the slower-working compliance devices to bear and waiting for them to take effect.

Finally, compliance devices differ in how *costly* they tend to be to their users in terms of effort or resources. It is surprising how little attention has been given in books on school practice, and on contingent reinforcement "behavior modification," to the amount of effort teachers are required to expend on possible disciplinary procedures. A second-grade teacher who had a rather noisy class, for example, decided to experiment one day with her own contingent reinforcement scheme, ignoring all unwanted behavior and lavishly praising and complimenting children who behaved as she wished. She reported immediate, fantastic success in improving order. She also reported being so exhausted at the end of the day that she was abandoning her scheme. Some principals make such great use of threats, punishments, and servility-promoting norms that they put themselves into a continuing adversary relationship with students and are consequently exhausted at the end of every day. Some modifications in physical settings can be very cheap in effort. Most communicating of information is likewise undemanding. Promises come cheap in immediate effort; when they are effective, assuming they are kept, they tend to carry some cost. Threats, too, come cheap; when they are effective, their cost to the person who makes them may be quite low, except the cost in emotional strain; when they are ineffective, they commit that person to the threatened action, which may or may not be costly. Procedures that stimulate students to think or change their emotional dispositions, like quasi-therapeutic techniques, tend to cost a lot of effort. Instrumental norms are as costly in effort as whatever influence measures are needed to bring about compliance with them. Those that call for students' doing things they badly want not to do, or refraining from doing things they badly do want to do, are likely, of course, to be quite costly.

The other way a compliance device may be costly is that it may have a tendency to diminish the resources that the person who uses it has at his disposal for discharging his governance responsibility. While some devices are such that using them enhances one's capability of influencing students in the future, some diminish it. Occasionally, principals and teachers, while endeavoring to get students to conform to particular rules, will squander a great deal of their capability to influence their behavior in the future. They are particularly prone to do this with their good-will rating.

Norms, too, can be costly in their effects on the power of whoever is supposed to get students to comply with them. Those that are affirmative (calling on students to *do* things) tend in general to be more costly than those

that are negative (calling on students to *refrain from doing* things), particularly if they call on students to do things they find unpleasant. Thus instrumental norms incidental to punishment may be very costly, as may servility-promoting instrumental norms.

Norms themselves can be costly in terms of the power of whoever is supposed to get students to comply with them. Those which call for students doing things they find particularly unpleasant tend to be particularly costly. Norms which are affirmative, and call upon students to do things, tend in general to be more costly than those that call upon them to refrain from doing things. Instrumental norms incidental to punishment may be very costly, as may servility-promoting instrumental norms.

This brings us to the third major aspect of governance.

APPARATUSES FOR GOVERNANCE

For norms to be decided on and compliance devices put to work to get students to comply with them, the school must decide who is to do which parts of the job; that is, the various governance tasks must be assigned to specific people, and these people must have whatever it takes to be effective. Let's look first at the second requirement, which was touched on earlier, where it was noted that using compliance devices effectively depends on prerequisite conditions.

All compliance devices probably require their users to know certain kinds of things—about the students, about the school, or about possibilities of different kinds. For some procedures, as has been seen, the user may need a certain image: credibility, good-will rating, fearsomeness, or the kind of undefined prestige that carries with it the message that in any real confrontation, one is likely to be the winner. Such personal attributes, together with the more tangible resources to which one may have access—help from other people, physical materials, and the like—together make up the resources that a principal, teacher, or student undertaking to bring about students' compliance with norms may draw on. If one is to influence students' behavior, one must have some of these resources, and the main reason beginning teachers often have qualms about discipline is that they feel they lack the resources they need.

Besides resources, or access to them, the would-be influencer of students' behavior must have some *disposition* to try seriously to set behavioral norms for the students and to use the compliance devices he chooses. He or she must be psychologically ready to be a leader of the particular kind the situation calls for. In a democratic society, "pushing other people around" is frowned on, and teachers may initially be more gentle than most of the rest of the population. Thus, it is quite common for beginning teachers to be diffident or have emotional blocks about trying to influence students' behavior. It may help teachers if they think of influencing behavior in the direction of what governance norms call for as a political or bureaucratic function that goes with the job. One isn't authorized to do it merely because one likes to do it; nor is one exempted from doing it because one doesn't like it. There is not always a one-to-one correspondence between what one feels like doing as a person and what one ought to do as an incumbent of a professional position under contract with a school district. But agreeing to influence behavior as required is part of agreeing to take charge of a class.

When students are invited to share in group

self-governance, they may react the same way. Governance cannot be effective except insofar as those whose obligation it is to play governance roles have the disposition to do so.

They must also, of course, have certain skills as well. They must have skill in timing initiatives vis-à-vis the students in question. For any particular procedure they are using, they must have whatever technical skill it requires, whether it be the athletic ability to restrain a wild student physically, the ability to counsel, the ability to design and operate a token economy, or whatever. In the case of many procedures, they may have to have skill in establishing their credibility or trustworthiness. And under some circumstances, when students may misinterpret their intentions or motives, they need skill in avoiding miscommunications. The need for these various kinds of skills, particularly the last two, causes some beginning teachers a good deal of trouble. Idealistic, humane beginners, starting to work with students who are accustomed to restrictive and punitive settings, particularly need to learn how to avoid sending unintended messages to students, telling them that now anything goes.[4]

Taken together, these three—the resources, the necessary disposition to act, and the appropriate skills—make up a would-be influencer's capability to influence students' behavior. This capability is nothing more nor less than *power*. The term "power" is one that most educators dislike. It has overtones of "might makes right" and of ruthless manipulation. But power is, in fact, simply the capability of doing something. Since, as was seen in Chapter 1, various people have various rights at stake in schools, and since, up to a point, students' conduct must be regulated so that justice will prevail, the power to influence students' behavior is not necessarily an evil thing, but indeed a necessary and potentially a beneficial thing. School officials should not try to hide from the fact that they have this power and exercise it, but try rather to decide in a professional fashion how their power should and should not be used, and try to achieve and husband whatever amount and kind of power they need for seeing to it that the rights of those who depend on them are safeguarded.

Power is only one aspect of a school's apparatus for the governance of students. The other is some understanding about who is to do which aspect of the job. Legally, the authority to regulate students' conduct rests ultimately with principals and teachers; in practice, however, they may share the work with others, especially teacher aides and students. While aides and students generally shouldn't be allowed to overrule the judgment of school officials about important elemental norms, they can share in the thinking about which norms fall into that category, and they can, within limits, make decisions about the degree of importance of different elemental norms. For example, students may be able to decide just as well as teachers, or perhaps better, what rules about traffic in the corridors are most conducive to getting people to their classes efficiently. They also may set instrumental norms, deciding, for instance, what rules are best for preventing students' extorting money from other students in the toilets. Also, students may carry a great deal of the work of influencing one another's behavior. Over the years, many schools have successfully used student patrols and monitors to gain compliance with rules both with norms set by the school authorities and with norms set by the students themselves. Student activities of these kinds that are part of a school's conventions and routines represent, of course, political

instrumental norms.

No program of governance for students is complete, then, without both these aspects of a governance apparatus. What form they should take in a given school at a given time, and how one can get them into that form, are two of the questions that must be considered.

NOTES

1. See B. F. Skinner, "Why Teachers Fail," *Saturday Review*, 16 October 1965, pp. 80-21, 98-102.
2. See Fritz Redl, "Management of Discipline Problems in Normal Students," in *From Learning for Love to Love of Learning: Essays in Psychoanalysis and Education*, eds. Rudolph Ekstein and Rocco L. Motto (New York: Brunner-Mazel Publishers, 1969).
3. Jerome S. Bruner, "Needed: A Theory of Instruction," *Educational Leadership* 20 (May 1963): 531-32.
4. See Edward T. Ladd, "Moving to Positive Strategies for Order-Keeping with Kids Accustomed to Restrictions, Threats, and Punishments," *Urban Education* 6 (January 1972): 331-47.

Applying Norms and Compliance Devices to Different Situations

How can one choose, from all the possible norms and compliance devices, those that best fit a particular situation? One may choose hurriedly and intuitively, or one may choose consciously and with calculation. However one goes about dealing with the problem, though, there is always a place for the process of thinking situations through, either before or after the fact, and deciding rationally what are, or would have been, the most suitable courses of action. For the sake of simplicity, what follows is written as if the decision were still to be made.

Practical people, because they are practical, tend to say, "Tell us what we should do." It is natural to be disappointed when the answer comes back, "It depends!" But it *does* depend. If one asked a physician what one should do about a headache, he, too, might well reply, "It depends." In the case of a headache, one would have some idea what it would depend on: the cause or causes of the complaint and the remedies available. In the case of a discipline problem, what the solution depends on also can be specified. (There are more ways than one in which discipline problems are like headaches.)

It has already been suggested that there are aspects of situations that may make a difference in regard to the regulating of students' behavior. The following is a summary of the important aspects to consider. Because in practical settings principals and teachers usually have to make decisions about ways of bringing about students' compliance with existing norms before they are in a position to do very much about changing those norms, we shall start with the kinds of circumstances that are particularly relevant to the selecting of compliance devices.

The attributes of the norm in question. First, perhaps, comes the matter of being sure what

norm one is concerned with. Is it really that the children should not play with the soccer ball after the bell rings? Or is it perhaps that they get to their next classes on time? The latter norm might call not for interfering with the play itself, but merely reminding the students how little time is left.

Then one might have to take into account the extent of the norm's realism. Is it really possible for children to be quiet for the specified length of time? If it isn't, no matter how important the norm, there's no point in trying to enforce it. One can only take another tack to protect the rights at issue. If the norm is an instrumental one, of course, one may well be able to substitute another one for it, or use a compliance measure instead.

How important is the norm? This is a critical question, one that must be asked repeatedly by school personnel. The more important the norm is, the more of an effort, obviously, one is obligated to make, and the greater expense of other kinds one must be willing to shoulder in order to bring about compliance with it.

Is the norm such that getting children to comply with it is likely to produce side effects that might injure someone, educationally, psychologically, or otherwise? Then it may be that one should not try to enforce it but should replace it with another, if it is an instrumental norm, or drop it entirely, if it is a less important elemental norm. The same may apply if the norm is such that to get children to comply with it would be a very costly undertaking.

There may, however, be unexpected consequences from dropping a norm. It may improve or damage one's good-will rating and, thus, one's legitimate power. It may communicate the message that one feels unable to resist students' pressure; in other words, that students have the power to overturn norms. Such a message is a tricky thing. On the one hand, as has been suggested, students must have the educational experience of successfully challenging norms and getting them changed. On the other hand, if they get the idea that they can successfully challenge every norm they don't like, they might go on a rampage of noncompliance. How much effort it will take to communicate to students the exact change in norms that is taking place and to avoid or correct misunderstandings, depends partly on the situation. These are considerations to weigh in deciding whether to try to get students to comply with a norm and, if so, how hard to try, or whether to replace it or drop it.

Finally, does the norm call for students to *do* something or to *refrain from doing* something? It may make a lot of difference in the probable effectiveness of different approaches. (Getting students to do things is generally harder, of course, than getting them not to do things.)

The prospects of noncompliance. What one will need to do in a given situation will depend on how things stand and the direction in which they are moving.

Obviously, there is a difference between a situation where students are actually in noncompliance at the moment and one in which there is only a threat of noncompliance. When students are in noncompliance, one will usually want to consider how long the noncompliance is likely to last in the absence of intervention. If it is coming to an end, there may be no need to do anything about it. Another thing to consider is how likely it is that with or without intervention, the noncompliance will be repeated. If it is unlikely ever to occur again, or certain to recur no matter what one does, there may be no purpose in intervening against it.

Sometimes it is likely that students will comply with the norm in question even if there is no intervention at all. Good judgment is required in such situations. Sometimes school people act too hastily and, as a result, make minor problems into large ones. There is a time to act and a time to ignore.

In assessing all aspects of a situation, it is useful to know a good deal about the particular student or students involved. One child or group of children may be less or more likely to comply with the particular norm. One group may be particularly rowdy on Mondays, another on Fridays. With younger children especially, the time of day may make a lot of difference as to what is likely to happen—and what is needed.

Finally, it can make a big difference how *far* the students' behavior departs from what the norm calls for, since that probably has a lot to do with the degree of danger it implies.

The particular kind of effectiveness called for. How reliably must one bring about students' compliance with the norm in question? How quickly? How important is it for the compliance to be lasting? In selecting a compliance device, one will want to consider the answers to those questions.

Since the effectiveness of almost all the possible measures depends at least partly on the way the students concerned view situations and think and feel about them, successful prediction of how well various possible measures are likely to work calls for understanding one's students.

Children inevitably view situations differently from the way teachers and principals do. In a given situation, each child has his own personal concerns, his own hopes and fears, and his own logic. The best way to understand the child's behavior is to develop a pretty good idea of how the situation looks to him. His emotional repertoire is the same as ours—although this sometimes may be hard to believe—and his logical processes are the same as ours, too. The differences between his interpretations and feelings about situations and ours reflect the different assumptions brought to them, different experiences within them, selective perception, and sometimes faulty logic, all of which beset adults, too.

It is good exercise, therefore, when one is trying to decide what to do in a given situation, to try to answer such questions as these: Does the behavior the school asks of the student seem possible to him? How difficult or easy does it seem? How appealing or unappealing? What may make the unwanted behavior appealing to him? What may be missing that would make the desired behavior appealing?

One doesn't need to be a psychologist to answer questions like these, although psychological training probably helps. Most principals and teachers can learn a large part of what they need to know by recalling their own childhood and imagining how they themselves would feel in a similar situation, by observing children individually and in groups, and by listening to them and their friends and enemies. This is possible if principals and teachers allow themselves to set aside any feeling of obligation to moralize and instead permit children to talk without showing approval or disapproval. Doing this for the first time, one may be surprised to find out what frightening, unresponsive giants principals and teachers sometimes are in children's imaginations.

To the extent one understands how children see things, one is better able to judge what changes have to be made in the situation to

make complying behavior seem both possible and attractive to the children.

How do these particular children stereotype teachers? If they believe that only nasty teachers want to keep order or can, they will probably interpret a gentle teacher's actions differently from the way they are intended.

What do children know that has a bearing on their behavior? Do they know the rules they are expected to obey? What do these children particularly like and dislike as a group and individually? In what might they be interested? This information points to possible promises and rewards, instrumental norms, information children might be glad to have, questions they can be stimulated to think about, and so on, as well as to political norms or instrumental norms of other kinds that might promote compliance.

How far do children trust adults? Only insofar as a principal or teacher has the children's trust can his promises and cautions function reliably. If one has not forfeited one's credibility, a threat may be more reliable; in fact, since the children may not want to take any chances, it may work even if one has.

The practical possibilities for using various compliance devices. What are the students' capabilities? How able are they, for instance, to defer gratification? How much skill do they have in group self-government? How dependent emotionally have they become on a restrictive-punitive environment? If they're very much so, they may need a sort of withdrawal program before they can respond fully to measures allowing more freedom and requiring more thought. Often a whole school needs such a program; sometimes only the new students.[1]

One must also consider one's capabilities for influencing a situation. These capabilities depend on one's *power* and one's *psychological characteristics*.

What resources is one in a position to draw on in a particular situation? There is a gamut of resources available in most elementary schools, but there are usually omissions, such as opportunities to reward children with free time, rank, status, material objects, money, or trips, or with prerogatives more important than cleaning the board or going after the milk. Each one of these, however, is available and is used in some schools.

Part of the power that teachers and principals almost invariably need is a disposition or willingness to try to influence children's behavior, but they vary greatly in their disposition to do so. Some have a hard time holding themselves back; others find the notion of influencing a child somewhat repugnant; most fall somewhere in between. The first group obviously has no shortage of this aspect of power. The second, however, is often essentially powerless—for example, the decent, humane beginners who don't even like to say to anyone, "Please be quiet!" A teacher who suffers from this kind of powerlessness may be helped by thinking through the full implications of his professional position. He has not only momentary obligations of courtesy to the child he confronts, but also obligations to him as he will be in future years, to other children in the present and in the future, and to the school as a whole and the public to whom the school belongs. If he looks at the question of influencing children's behavior in this light, he may find that he has more disposition to use influence devices than he originally thought.

Most teachers have feelings and characteristics of one kind or another that prevent their doing what they want to do or ought to do. One shy young teacher who would have

helped himself a lot if he had shown his students he had a sense of humor said that he was simply unable to, that his expressions of good will for students were necessarily limited to being polite and keeping cool on occasions when someone else might have exploded in anger.

Today's teachers as a group are probably by temperament more humane and sociable than the general run of the population and are no doubt more vulnerable than one generally recognizes to the human pressures under which they live and work. Although teachers deal with human beings all the time, these dealings are closely circumscribed. Teachers are usually under great pressure both from the people they encounter at work and from within themselves. As many studies confirm, their profession is a lonely one. The more personal stress a teacher is under, be it conscious or unconscious, the more he may be compelled to be ego-involved in discipline and hence to deal with students defensively and aggressively, which means to be restrictive and punitive.

Another aspect of power is skill. Research shows that a teacher's repertoire of skills for dealing with discipline can be enlarged very quickly, and the same is true of principals. But at any given time a principal or teacher is obviously limited to doing those things he is capable of doing.

So far in this chapter, we have been talking about tailoring compliance devices to different situations. What about norms?

Because the rights various people have at stake differ in different situations, and the student behavior required for upholding rights also differs, so should the elemental norms for students' behavior. Principals and teachers should always ask themselves, how great is each of the possible threats to various rights in this particular situation? Answering that question is, of course, not easy. It may be hard, for example, to determine just how high the level of disorder in a room or a school can rise before it seriously jeopardizes children's learning. There are occasions when there must be real quiet. There are other occasions when children are quite able to learn in the presence of what to an adult looks like chaos. In situations that seem alike, furthermore, the dangers of serious injury, physical or otherwise, may be quite different.

Under public pressure to keep schools neat, tidy, orderly, and quiet, principals and teachers who are in doubt as to what norms are necessary are often somewhat inclined toward restrictiveness, a tendency they would be wise to keep in mind.

As the foregoing suggests, there are ways in which situations differ from one another that apply both to the selection of compliance devices and to the establishing of norms. Two must be mentioned, one of them at some length.

First, the *particular educational stakes in the situation*. To consider the educational stakes may mean simply to tailor compliance devices to the individual's educational needs: for instance, making particularly great use of rewards with students accustomed to failure; mobilizing a sympathetic counselor, teacher, or fellow student to talk with an individual who needs counseling; or refraining from bringing parents in when what they would do or say might be likely to retard the student in his progress toward maturity.

But the problem is usually much more complex. The most important educational stake involved in discipline situations is the educating of students for citizenship in a free but law-abiding society. It is common for students

to be backward in this regard, that is, in their ability to regulate their own behavior.

The more backward children are in self-governance, however, the more they need individual freedom and opportunities for group self-regulation. Yet the more retarded a child is in self-governance, generally the worse use he makes of such freedom and such opportunities as he already has to engage in democratic decision making; in other words, the more of a discipline problem he is. Under these circumstances, to modify the school's norms so that he has more freedom, or to use less autocratic and hence less reliable compliance devices so that he may assume a larger role in governing himself, would seem bound to result in his behaving less responsibly. Generally speaking, indeed, *the student least able to use freedom wisely and to participate at an appropriate level in group self-government are the very ones who particularly need more freedom and more experience with democracy.*

This is the greatest dilemma in discipline—so great that some school people, it seems, give up hope of ever reconciling such students' needs in this area with other students' needs to have the school program as a whole move forward safely and effectively. There are understandable reasons for this despair. Most American elementary schools today still have a great number of rules and requirements. In technical terms, their elemental norms tend to be assigned high importance—compliance with most of them is viewed as absolutely essential—and the same tends to be true of their instrumental norms, which also are numerous. Therefore, most schools make much use of the kinds of compliance devices that are highly reliable and rapidly effective; that is, threats and punishments, implicit and overt. If gum chewing or talking back is viewed as an intolerable offense, the tendency is to jump on them very hard. Adults tend, in short, to keep the regulating of children's behavior in their own hands. (It is interesting how often school people speak of the governance process as the *control* of pupils.)

That most children, while progressing through school, make little progress in learning to make wise, safe use of freedom and learning to regulate themselves in groups is not the only consequence of this situation. Another is a degree of alienation and in some cases hostility on the part of many children, which gets steadily worse as they grow older. The more alienated and hostile children are, the less disposed they are to comply with norms set by adults. In other words, the more likely they are to "misbehave," to use the adult word, and the less inclined adults are—understandably—to relax the norms or to abandon the use of threats and punishments in favor of compliance devices that are more educational. A vicious circle is the result. The atmosphere is tense; teachers easily become exasperated—which explains the still widespread use of paddling and other forms of physical punishment—and principals are forced into the roles of bogeyman and executioner.

Such a situation infringes not only on students' rights to just and humane treatment, but on their rights to make educational progress—as well as often making life extremely unpleasant for principals and teachers.

How can school people lift themselves and their students out of such a vicious circle?

Obviously, getting out entails relaxing the norms—lowering the importance attached to certain elemental norms, and reducing some of the instrumental norms or replacing them with ones that are easier to enforce. Any relaxing of norms may, however, communicate to

students the unintended message that the school no longer cares as much as it did about their behavior—that now anything goes—or simply that school officials have lost some of their power over students. Therefore, as norms are relaxed, it is important for school officials to make clear to students just which norms are being relaxed and the fact that the other norms remain intact. It is also important to communicate to students that school officials have not lost their legitimate power to bring about compliance with the remaining norms, which means in particular that they have no less resolve than before to do what they are obligated to do in this respect.

When schools relax norms, students will inevitably use some of their new freedom in ways that school officials view as unwise or obnoxious. It is part of the nature of true freedom that other people may use it in ways that we ourselves disapprove. Inevitably, while students are learning to use a newly granted freedom, there may be risks, just as there is a risk the first time a child is allowed to climb a tree or an adolescent is permitted to drive a car. School officials can minimize these risks by providing back-up services, but if the freedom is real, they cannot avoid them entirely. Furthermore, school officials cannot be sure that their communications about the precise limits of a grant of freedom and about their continued power to bring about compliance with the norms that remain will be fully understood by students. They should expect students to overstep even the new bounds somewhat. While principals and teachers must concern themselves about any overstepping of bounds and, when the norm is important, must stop it, they will be more successful in breaking the vicious circle if they allow students to know that they understand that when norms are in the process of being relaxed, some overstepping is normal and natural.

Extricating a school from this vicious circle also requires a change in the kinds of compliance devices used. Because the more reliable and quick-acting devices are also the ones that limit freedom more and, in general, tend to arouse resentment, use of them must be reduced. To bridge the gap, less reliable and slower-acting devices will probably have to be used more extensively and intensively than before. Thus, if punishments are used less, or less severely, rewards may have to be increased a great deal, or much more time may have to be spent in dialogue with students or in student self-government sessions. There is a good deal of experience showing that when such changes are made, the level of student compliance with norms tends, in fact, to become higher than before.

One very useful way school officials can increase their power to influence students' behavior and thus get through difficult transitions is to do things or institute practices that have strong emotional appeal to students. Some school officials have accomplished wonders by bringing to bear in the kind of leadership they provide students a degree of salesmanship or even charisma, or by developing special group symbols and rituals—practices that tend to raise students' morale and build emotional loyalty to the institution, its representatives, and its requirements. Such approaches, which make powerful use of rewarding as a basic influence procedure, can overcome hostility and strengthen school officials' power to influence behavior, and thus permit a transition to full-fledged adult self-regulation.

The more vicious the circle has been, and the older the students involved, the harder it

will be to break the circle. In some high schools, it is extremely difficult. Yet there are tested ways in which it can be done, and school officials have an obligation to use them. They should, therefore, choose disciplinary approaches that allow them to do so.

I have dwelt at some length on the disciplinary approaches required when students are retarded in their education for citizenship and on the problem of meeting those students' needs when they and the school are caught up in a vicious circle of mutual antagonism. Where students have other special educational needs or disabilities, the choice of disciplinary approaches should take them into account, also. To give one example, when students are emotionally overdependent on adults, adults should deliberately avoid making much use of rewards that might perpetuate that dependence.

A final consideration in selecting both norms and compliance devices is the *special legal requirements and limitations that apply in the situation.*

First, of course, there are the regulations and documents binding on the particular school, such as state and board of education policies, to consider. Second, there are the interpretations of the law handed down by courts, especially those dealing with school officials' supervisory obligations and students' rights. Predicting what the courts in a given jurisdiction will say isn't always easy, partly because courts are not always consistent, and partly because they are inevitably somewhat unpredictable. Superintendents may provide good legal advice, but often the school law that they have studied is out of date, and the counsel they get from school board lawyers is more conservative and restrictive than what courts will, in fact, decide. To obtain a balanced picture, it may be wise for a principal or teacher to keep abreast of what is written about school law in good educational journals or to consult informally with competent lawyers of various persuasions.

With situations differing from one another in all these different ways, a good case could be made for the impossibility of giving school people any useful advice about just how to regulate student conduct in any given situation. Nonetheless, elementary schools tend to have much in common with one another, and certain kinds of problems, as has been mentioned, occur frequently. For this reason, it does make sense to offer some advice for certain recurring tasks. This will be done in the next four chapters.

NOTE

1. See Edward T. Ladd, "Moving to Positive Strategies for Order-Keeping with Kids Accustomed to Restrictions, Threats, and Punishments," *Urban Education* 6 (January 1972): 331-47.

The Principal's Leadership Role in the Governance Program

The principal has more responsibility than any other single person for the norms and influence measures used in the school to achieve governance ends. This does not mean that the principal has the sole responsibility for the governance program. It does mean that he or she must exercise initiative in every aspect of the development and implementation of the program. It also implies that the building principal is the climate setter for the school, a person whose behavior is key to the success or failure of the total governance program.

The principal must be certain that everyone in the school knows his or her own particular role and plays it at least adequately. He has the responsibility for seeing that the basic norms for the school are defined, whether in writing or not, and that their various degrees of importance are clear. He has to see to it that at any given time an appropriate ratio of freedom to order is in effect. He has to see to it that appropriate instrumental norms are defined and that there are direct influence measures for obtaining adequate compliance with both instrumental and political norms. The principal has to see to it that proper norms for teachers' performance in choosing and applying those measures they will have to employ are developed and understood. He also has to lead in the development of any political norms that go beyond the bounds of individual classes. Thus a unique way in which the principal can contribute to governance is to work with groups of students larger than individual classes.

It is the principal who, above all, has to work with the faculty as a group and with students as a group to see that proper disciplinary or governance policies and procedures are developed and put into effect. This obviously calls for time spent in faculty and committee meetings and meetings with students, discuss-

ing rules, defining rights, working out methods of gaining compliance, and dealing with alleged violations. Once this has been done, the principal must be continually engaged in revising it—all of which takes a great deal of time. Activities of this kind will begin to take place in a school only if the principal assumes the initiative.

Unfortunately, public elementary schools in the United States have had too little recent experience with anything approaching significant student involvement in governance matters to give principals much help in deciding what procedures and forms have been found to be useful in practice. How much direct democracy should there be? Over what specific matters should students have some say, and what kind and how much over each? In general, students should obviously not be permitted to abrogate important, basic norms, nor to adopt instrumental norms or other approaches for enforcing them that do not provide adequate guarantees that important basic norms will be enforced. But just how much say can they be allowed over less important norms? And how much can they be involved in the process of gaining compliance? What is the place of student monitors or supervisors in a modern elementary school? Should there be a student court? Principals and faculties will have to do their own experimenting on these problems.[1]

Principals must provide for the review and evaluation of the performance of teachers, as well as of other persons who share in the governance task. Principals themselves can attempt to decide where particular teachers or others are strong and where they need help. In more formal evaluation of individual teachers' disciplinary work, faculty morale, performance, and evaluation will be enhanced if the teachers themselves are heavily involved in the entire evaluation process, including the establishment of the criteria on which the evaluation will be based. This procedure, followed in other professional circles—most conspicuously on university campuses—is recommended for schools, as well. Obviously, any evaluation should steer clear of such commonly used but unsophisticated criteria as the quietness or neatness of the classroom, and it should be based on mutually agreed on norms.

Very rarely will a principal feel obligated to intervene directly in a disciplinary matter and give a teacher or other supervisor of children a direct order, or even relieve him of his class. The risks to the self-confidence and prestige of the teacher, not to mention to the principal's rapport with him, are so great that such an action is warranted only in an emergency.

Guidance counselors usually play an important part in the governance programs of their schools, and it ordinarily falls to the principal to define the role the counselor is to play. A counselor's chief role, according to the profession, is to assist his or her client on the client's terms, and there are schools where the counselor's job is so designed that that is the role he plays. In such a school, the counselor is not in authority over students; students go to the counselor only if they want to; they are often encouraged to do so but are not sent, and what they say to him is in confidence. He is not a disciplinarian, and he stays out of conferences in which possible punishments may be discussed. In many schools, however, guidance counselors serve as psychologically trained assistant principals or student personnel managers. Principals and teachers call on them for help of many kinds, including help with discipline tasks. In these schools, counselors have authority over students; students

are "sent" to them, and in matters of importance neither their conversations with students nor their files remain confidential. There is no doubt that, because most of today's principals feel so greatly in need of relief, counselors play this second role as frequently as they do the first.

Some principals expect guidance counselors to play both roles, and in the discharging of many of their responsibilities they can. But where there is a conflict between the student's goals or behavior on the one hand, and the administration's goals or requirements on the other, a guidance counselor cannot walk both sides of the street. If he attempts to do so, he may betray the trust of the student whose helper he purports to be. Because he is known as an agent of the administration, however, he is more likely to fail to win the confidence and trust of the student in the first place.

Until educators succeed in overcoming this serious dilemma, it is the principal's task to decide which role he chooses to have the counselor play. Once the decision is made and everyone in the school is clear about it, the counselor can contribute helpfully to governance, either directly or indirectly, either as the student's helper or as the principal's.

Principals are implicitly expected to evaluate the governance arrangements of the school as a whole. A newspaper recently carried a story about a professional group's investigation of discipline in a city school system "after one teacher was transferred for allegedly slapping a student and a . . . student was suspended for reportedly hitting a principal." Such an investigation of governance conditions, conducted when feelings are high, is a poor substitute for thoughtful, calm investigation conducted as a normal, professional routine. Any appraisal of discipline as a whole should allow for changes that may have been made or that may be in process and people have not had time to adjust to yet. Some criteria of effectiveness might be, for example, the extent to which the school has been able to dispense with punishment as an influence measure; its attendance figures; the level of vandalism (a negative criterion, obviously); the number and quality of suggestions children make; and other indications of high morale.

It falls to the principal more than anyone else to interpret governance practices to the community, a task that is often difficult. Opinion polls and numerous unpleasant episodes have demonstrated how strongly some parents react to the relaxation of autocratic discipline. However, the central office often relies on the principal to keep the parents happy. One promising way to educate parents on this score is to involve as many of them as possible in the day-to-day activities of the school as visitors, consultants, and aides. When schools move as fast as they should in evolving a governance program, some battles cannot be avoided, and some of them will be lost. Principals should find comfort in the thought that their professional obligation is to do the right thing and not necessarily to win.

As the administrator of the school, the principal may receive communications about governance requirements from his superiors and pass the information on to his subordinates. It is for him to see that his subordinates comply with the school system's requirements. Because he is formally accountable for what goes on in the school, he must know what *is* being done in regard to discipline and anticipate what *may* be done. This means keeping lines of communication open with everyone—particularly with the children most likely to cause trouble.

The principal's dealings with superintendents and other school district officials have traditionally been seen as the dealings of an employee with his boss. In recent years, however, that concept has proved educationally inadequate.

In the superintendent's office, things look different from the way they look in the schools, and district offices depend on constant enlightenment and pressure from those who work in the field. Furthermore, since it is inherent for large organizations to work slowly and cautiously, teachers and principals must be freer to decide things their own way than they are usually authorized to do by central staffs. A principal who wishes to innovate in a way not explicitly authorized has the choice of asking permission or acting without asking. If he does the former, he puts the people in the central office on the spot: should they give their approval, they can be blamed for anything that might go wrong. He also leaves the decision as to how much elbow room he is to have to the central office staff, rather than making it himself. The answer may be very slow in coming and, of course, it may be "no." Principals who have innovated successfully seem to be in the habit of acting without seeking advance approval. A compromise is to inform the central office of what one is about to do, but carefully avoid asking for formal approval.

When superintendents have made disciplinary policies and limitations explicit, principals will normally have to abide by them. Still, in an emergency, any professional should be prepared to break a bureaucratic rule and do what good professional practice requires—and, of course, accept the consequences. It is not good professional practice, for example, to obey an illegal order, an order to engage in educational malpractice, or an order to pass on confidential information to someone who is not entitled to use it or who might misuse it.

All this is not so radical as it sounds. It is consistent with the process of redefining the roles of teachers and principals as professionals that is now taking place in the nation. Most superintendents with recent training have read about collegial authority, and many believe in it. Since few of them, however, know how to put it into effect successfully or are ready to do so, principals have to give them a little nudge in that direction.

Creating the proper atmosphere for a governance program is a task that needs attention in every school—much more attention than is usually recognized. It is always possible that the students will feel they are not receiving enough satisfaction from complying with all the rules and requirements to make it worth the sacrifice.

To accomplish this task, measures need not be quick acting, of course, but they must, above all, be persistent. They must be collectively reliable, although no single one need be. There is time; if necessary, taking these measures can be delayed for days or even weeks. The undertaking is important enough to justify measures that are rather costly. Because of their long-range character, it is essential that they be free of injurious educational side effects.

Here are some suggestions for both teachers and principals:

1. Do things for and with students that build their morale and their love for the class or the school. Make school a place where interesting things go on and where children are treated with respect, warmth, and trust.
2. Make everything about the physical set-

ting as attractive and pleasant as possible.

3. Make what is taught and the way it is taught as interesting and challenging as possible.

4. Seize opportunities to compliment students and to thank them.

5. Avoid comparing one student with another.

6. Permit students to remain after school if they wish, and stay around and make yourself accessible to them.

7. As soon as you have established a functioning governance relationship with students, begin going out of your way more and more to let them see not only your professional posture, but your personal posture as well. Without imposing yourself on them, let them know about some of your feelings, your mistakes, your hang-ups, your areas of ignorance; let them know when something delights you; let them get to know your family; and so on.

8. Get to be a real friend to your students. Do the things friends do, like mixing with them socially (with older children, you may have to start this gradually so they won't feel you're intruding) and being particularly helpful when they're in trouble—even if the trouble they're in is with you.

9. Get to know the children in their home settings. If you visit, visit not just homes, but kids at their homes.

10. Institute lots of privileges and prerogatives, major and minor, that students can aspire to, earn, and, if necessary, lose.

11. Keep picking the children's brains informally for ideas about how the class and the school can be made better. When their candid criticisms hurt or offend you, try at first not to show your discomfort but to take delight in the fact that they trust you enough to talk frankly to you. Later, when you have developed a fully honest give-and-take relationship with one another, feel free to argue back.

12. Put a lot of the decision making about instrumental norms and requirements, and about compliance, into the hands of the students—both as individuals running their own lives and, where appropriate, as a democratically functioning group.

13. Encourage free discussion of any subject of interest throughout the school: the way the school is run, politics, crime, drugs, sex, *anything*. Arrange for free student access to bulletin boards, mimeograph machines, and the intercom (under appropriate conditions).

14. If you can get the teachers to agree, increase the adult-child ratio with the help of teacher aides and volunteers.

15. Let upper grade and, if possible, high school students share in supervision and teaching.

These suggestions have a common theme: getting to know and work with students in ways schools have used infrequently in the past. In a sense, the keys to any student governance program are knowing the students on a personal basis, making the school a place where people want to be (teachers and students alike), and providing students with opportunities to develop their own governance program.

NOTE

1. An explicit account of the early stages of such an experiment, along with practical suggestions for other principals, can be found in David I. Zatz, *School Democracy in Action: A New Administrative Technique for Principals, Students, Teachers, and Parents* (New York: Exposition Press, 1971).

Governance Tasks That Trouble Teachers and How Principals Can Help

Deciding just what to do in a disciplinary situation is so complex a task that a book like this can help a principal or a teacher only up to a point. The best prescriptions for different situations, often packages of several procedures, will differ, partly according to the personalities involved. There are many occasions when disciplinary action must be taken immediately and, thus, must obviously be intuitive. In any case, it must always be tailored to the principal's or the teacher's resources, dispositions, and skills. Each individual will have to develop a personal style. In doing so, he will probably draw on what he knows and has seen other people do, as well as on his imagination, and will develop habits that fit him. Since an individual style can be either helpful or damaging to children, however, it must constantly be reexamined and, insofar as it seems inappropriate in any way, modified.

As far as judging the effectiveness of an approach goes, these two principles should be kept in mind: 1) measures that are educationally more useful, and whose effects in producing compliance are more persistent, tend to be slower acting and less reliable; and 2) the most reliable and quickest acting measures tend to have damaging educational side effects. Principals and teachers are likely, however, to feel they must overcome this morning's chaos this morning, and put an end to today's petty or routine disorder today, or at least this week. Often they feel this way because many parents dislike noisy, disorderly schools and have ways both of making their preferences felt and of inducing principals and teachers to want to respond to them. Furthermore, rightly or wrongly, people who work in schools tend to suspect that on the issue of discipline, superintendents' views are inclined to be conservative. School people, then, are usually under great pressure to work themselves into believ-

ing what is not true but is reassuring: that measures that are quick acting and reliable are effective in the long run, and that they are also educationally superior, or at least educationally neutral.

These are rationalizations against which school people must constantly be on their guard. And the danger of falling into them, more than anything else, makes it important for school people to keep studying their disciplinary actions. They should allow themselves to respond to situations like the warm-blooded human beings they are—rather than like self-conscious computers—but they should also keep checking up on their intuitions and responses by subjecting them to thoughtful analysis. Each of the suggestions offered in this chapter will carry intuitive conviction for some principals. Used under typical circumstances, they will all stand up under theoretical analysis.

To judge by the way principals allocate their time, few of them see helping teachers learn how to deal with their problems as a large part of their role. However, the task teachers face are difficult in and of themselves; none more so than the disciplinary tasks, it seems, and teachers find it hard to develop a satisfactory personal style for dealing with them. They can use all the assistance they can get, and such help will pay off in a better school and better learning, as well as in other ways. Principals are in a particularly good position to give teachers the assistance they need or to see that someone else gives it to them.

Provided a principal has the necessary talents, perhaps the most effective single way he or she can help teachers is to talk with them (rather than *to* them), listen to them, and make suggestions. As he does so, it will help if he has thought through the various kinds of problems each teacher may have.

Teachers have difficulty with different aspects of governance, different governance tasks, which should be distinguished from one another. One is the prophylactic task of promoting general conditions in the classroom and the school that are conducive to student compliance with elemental norms. Another is the task of responding to major offenses against norms, a task, by the way, that teachers don't confront very often. What can be done to help teachers with these two tasks will be considered later. First, though, let us look at three other tasks that regularly confront teachers and cause them the most trouble.

In the case of each of the three, a number of specific suggestions that principals may pass on to teachers will be listed. Because circumstances in different elementary school classrooms around the country are remarkably alike, it seems possible to offer such suggestions without seriously violating the principle that measures must be tailored to fit the characteristics of individual situations. The suggestions won't always fit, and some teachers will probably reject them for one reason or another, or try them and find them wanting. Others who try them, however, will find them useful.

The sequence in which the three tasks and the suggestions for handling them are taken up is the sequence in which teachers most often have to face them.

Turning Chaotic Situations into Moderately Orderly Ones

The school brings an unorganized collection of children to a specific place at a specific time, and the teacher is expected to get them started

on some productive activities. Ordinarily, it is the teacher's responsibility to do what is known in parliamentary terminology as calling the meeting to order. Often the students come in quietly enough and settle down well enough, but sometimes there is chaos. This may be the case with a class the teacher knows well, when it has just come back from lunch, physical education, or outdoor play, or when for some reason a functioning order has broken down.

When there is chaos or the imminent threat of chaos, the teacher needs measures that are quick acting and reliable. The point is to establish order of almost any kind, so that the teacher can be in a position to take any of a variety of other measures. The measures taken at the start, therefore, need not ordinarily be persistent in effect. And, because getting started is quite important and should be a short-lived business, the teacher may properly use measures that are fairly high in cost and may even have injurious side effects.

Here are some specific suggestions that may help a teacher with this task:

1. If this is the beginning of your dealings with these children, decide beforehand just what limits and requirements you are going to try to get them to comply with for the first week or so. Don't make the restrictions very different from what the students are already accustomed to, except to eliminate any unnecessary requirements that are hard to enforce.
2. Get into place before the group arrives.
3. When you meet the class as a group, use a variety of means—your words, your tone of voice, your expression, where you stand—to communicate to them that you're a really decent, pleasant, friendly person, yet one who has serious work to do. Don't be so friendly as to give them the idea you won't do what you have to do as the person ultimately in charge—a somewhat different matter from you as a human being and friend. Let them know that there are limitations on you, too. ("I can't allow . . ." "I have to insist . . ." "I'd like to let you, but . . . .") Let the children know what the limits and requirements on their behavior are, and that if it becomes necessary to enforce the limits and requirements, you have the resources, the will, and the ability to do so. Say all this largely by your manner, not in words, which may take a little acting. For example, if gentleness doesn't work, you can speak a bit gruffly. Lead the children to believe that you're cool—even if you aren't—and that you're going to keep cool no matter what happens. (Indicate this, too, by your manner.)
4. Find a means to catch the attention of the majority of the children, shouting if—but only if—you must.
5. Aim for two things, in this order: everyone in a seat, or standing still and looking at you; and everyone essentially quiet. Keep working insistently but calmly to achieve these two things, even though it seems to take an hour.
6. If things don't go as you would like, try cajoling, giving very specific instructions, and calling on individuals ("You in the red sweater, please come over here now and sit down.").
7. If chaos persists, show slight impatience or slight irritation, but no more.
8. Don't say anything unfriendly or humiliating to anyone.
9. Try to avoid threats; if you feel you must threaten, make your threat ambiguous ("I'd hate to have to get anyone into trouble," "None of you wants to be punished, do you?" or "See me after school.").
10. Whatever happens, don't blow your

cool. If you feel panicky, just freeze; say nothing for a while.

11. If a situation gets dangerous, seek help.

12. Be ready to move into the next phase—acting affirmatively—as soon as you can.

Promoting Affirmative Behavior that Complies with the Norms

As a class moves out of the chaos stage, or if it has avoided chaos entirely, the task the teacher faces immediately is to get the show on the road. Because this takes a little skill, enterprise, and perhaps courage, it can be a problem, especially for beginning teachers.

Until the students are engaged in something positive, order has a tendency to disintegrate quickly, so the kind of measure most needed is one that is reliable and quick acting. If the measure has persistent effects, so much the better. It doesn't have to, however, because once governance is functioning, other measures can pick up any slack. Costly measures, though, should be avoided if possible.

Here are some suggestions principals may communicate to teachers:

1. Keep those students who have settled down waiting for the others, and wait to start your business until there is reasonably good order; that is, until all the students are at their places and fairly quiet and attentive. Then move promptly and with an appearance of confidence into your briefing, your questions, or your instructions.

2. If the students are restless and you're not likely to get complete order, and if the material or activities you're going to start with are likely to be quite appealing, go ahead as soon as about four-fifths of the group has become attentive, simply leaving the others behind.

3. Don't keep children waiting for your next move for more than a few seconds. Their attention span is short, and disorder can return.

4. Talk to the class as a group in a business-like, clear, but friendly and polite way. You might practice it at home.

5. Phrase instructions very clearly and make them affirmative rather than negative ("Please do this quickly," rather than "Don't dawdle"). Use familiar words ("answer" rather than "respond to"), but be prepared for some of the children not to understand or react as you want them to.

6. Don't call the students "boys and girls" or "class," both of which they usually hate. They love "ladies and gentlemen."

7. Keep an eye out for risk points, such as desks jammed too close together, a student who doesn't have a copy of the book, or friends starting to joke.

8. Where you detect restlessness, keep watch on it. Perhaps walk over toward the possible trouble spot, but appear to ignore it if you can; most elementary school children love attention enough to stop cutting up if that's the only way to obtain recognition.

9. Plan ahead of time for this stage; overplan; have interesting, intriguing things in mind to ask the kids or to invite them to discuss or do (rather than to do for them).

10. Keep expressing satisfaction with the progress ("Everybody have the book open at page 4? Good!"). Compliment individuals, without encouraging competition. Don't worry at this stage about formal achievement.

11. Until the affairs of the class are running smoothly, give them priority as much as you can over the personal affairs of one or two individuals who ask for help or attention. Tell the child who has a private request or question to wait until you have time for him.

12. Just as soon as you can, break up the class into groups—the smaller, the better—and get students working individually or cooperatively for the bulk of the day's activities. Don't try to teach the whole class all at once much of the time.

Dealing with Routine or Petty Disorder

The most common complaints from elementary school teachers about their students' behavior are that they talk out when they're supposed to be quiet and walk or run around the room when they're supposed to be in their seats. Even when things are orderly enough not to be characterized as chaotic, children still interrupt, make wisecracks, laugh uproariously, punch one another, engage in little fights, and throw things. Many beginning teachers and quite a number of experienced teachers face this problem. It is particularly likely to occur in grades four through six and at times when a teacher is trying to teach the whole class all at once, especially if the material is boring. It is likely to occur, too, if the teacher gets preoccupied with something that the class isn't involved in, like working at his or her desk alone, helping one youngster with a special problem, or responding to an interruption from outside.

In situations like these, it may not be of high importance to take any measure at all. Things can often rock along for a while, however uncomfortably for the teacher, without much harm being done. Because the problem is not really a grave one, the costs of various measures and their possible side effects should be weighed quite seriously. Here are some suggestions that may help teachers:

1. Don't blame either the kids or yourself personally for routine or petty disorder; it's the most natural thing in the world.

2. Work hard at first to distinguish your cool, *professional* posture, in which you necessarily represent the school and its demands, from the friendly, humorous, *personal* posture, to which you revert when you're not engaged in specific school business, and which you will eventually be able to fall into all day long. When you deal with children in other than a formal relationship, try to be as good a friend as you can.

3. Develop fun things you can show your students how to do and involve them in doing; if necessary, forget about academic learning for several weeks.

4. When you want quiet, ask for it by shushing, by words, or by some signal, but the moment you've got it, get on with saying or doing something that will capture the children's active interest and make their being quiet worth the sacrifice to them.

5. Appear to ignore behavior that is not dangerous or injurious. If you want to discourage a particular behavior, avoid rewarding it by paying attention to it. (Note that when you regularly overlook a certain kind of behavior you don't like, you in fact turn the norm into a less important one.)

6. If a child who is cutting up is a leader and his or her disorderliness is getting a lot of attention from other students, be neither unfriendly nor friendly toward him. Try standing near him, perhaps with a hand on his shoulder, or seating him where he is less visible and less able to interact with other children. Better yet, if it will work, put him to work on a chore. Distract the other children's attention from him as much as you can.

7. Try to act as if to say there are important, exciting things for the quieter students to do and rewards for them, including your attention

and approval and perhaps even tangible rewards, so the restless ones will do well to join them.

8. Control any temptation you may feel to yell at the class, except perhaps a single command, like "Quiet!" or "Stop that!" Try to preserve the good-will rating with which you probably started out.

9. Praise and compliment students constantly at first. If this doesn't work, try a token reward system, using points, credits, commendations, trading stamps, nutritional snacks, free time, privileges, and other rewards.

10. If some children are particularly bothersome, try to get to know them personally. Talk with them outside of office conferences or class—for example at lunch or at recess. Play games with them; visit them and their families at home.

11. Try having a time-out place (a rug, a circle on the floor, a booth against a wall) where a particularly restless or disruptive kid can be put for a while. Treat such a situation not as punishment but as a necessary, therapeutic time-out.

12. Never issue an ultimatum; that is, an explicit threat that if X happens—or doesn't happen—you will definitely do Y.

13. Try to control any temptation you may have to threaten at all, but when you feel you must, put your threat in the form of an ambiguous warning like "There's trouble down that road, Jim" or "Much more of that and I may have to do something you wouldn't like at all."

14. Work out an exchange plan with other teachers that will allow you to put such children in one another's rooms for thirty minutes or so when necessary.

15. If you feel you must stop a student's misbehavior and can think of nothing else but punishment that might do it, choose a mild punishment that will be over soon, such as a reprimand, an expression of disappointment or disgust, telling the student you'll talk to him later, keeping him in from recess for two minutes, keeping him after school for ten, or withdrawing a privilege for no more than a day. Announce the punishment to him in a quiet voice, without so much publicity as to embarrass him unnecessarily, and with as much appearance of regret—rather than glee—as you can.

16. Be consistent. Students don't know what to expect if the teacher enforces a rule one day and ignores it the next.

17. Never punish a group for the actions of a few. Such behavior can only lead to resentment on the part of students.

18. Don't be afraid to apologize to a student if you punish him unjustly. Apologizing for a mistake is a sign of strength, not of weakness.

19. If a child gets impossibly rambunctious, and if you think the principal is a humane person who is sympathetic and understanding with children, send or take him to the principal. Don't make the trip seem like a punishment, but say something like this: "We can't work this out, so let's see if you and the principal can." Under the same conditions, letting a child go voluntarily to the counselor is an alternative.

20. As soon as you can, get the class involved in drawing up rules for their behavior, subject to your final approval; reserve the right to include some rules of your own. Insist that the list be realistic; and for younger students (perhaps through fifth grade), post the rules conspicuously.

21. Discuss with the class the ways governance tasks can best be dealt with and adopt some procedures together. Be sure they are

doing this themselves and not just second-guessing you or being manipulated by you.

Talking with a teacher, listening to him, and making suggestions is perhaps, as has been said, the most effective way for a principal to help. How effective such conversations are depends heavily, of course, on how successfully the principal builds a mutually trusting and security-giving relationship with the teacher. Understanding teachers' questions and apprehensions about governance, and keeping in mind their situations as they experience them, as well as their hopes and fears, so far as these can be guessed, is not always easy. Here are some notes on the states of mind most likely to characterize beginning and experienced teachers, as they bear on the process of giving them help with discipline.

BEGINNING TEACHERS WITH DISCIPLINE PROBLEMS

People often go into teaching to be able to deal with children warmly and lovingly. They have not thought of themselves as regulators of behavior or as catalysts to get students to learn the habit of cooperative self-government. Nor does the idea appeal to them. More often than not they have been nourished on a love ideology ("Be nice to the kids and meet their needs, and all will go well"), an ideology so attractive to them that they fight any evidence that it isn't adequate. Perhaps because, as students, they have only recently lived through a guerrilla war with teachers, the last thing they want to do is play a teacherly role. If their students respond to them as enemies rather than friends, they are personally hurt. For some this is the first time in years that they have been subjected to personal attacks ("Drop dead!"). Not caring at first to try to govern children's behavior, when they decide they must, they lack the necessary skills and find themselves angry with their students—and then angry with themselves for being angry.

Often the beginner's first assignment requires him to work with children unlike any he has ever known before, children of a different social class or ethnic group. When this is so, his disciplinary problem is likely to be worse.

Eventually he must, albeit reluctantly, abandon any feeling of moral superiority he may have started out with and turn to experienced faculty members for example and advice. As he does this, however, he is caught in a further emotional conflict; he sees himself slip from the younger generation into the older, joining ranks with the former enemy.[1] He started out believing that governance is simply a matter of what kind of person one is. But the experiences he has gone through not only haven't clarified his view of the objective problem, but have entangled the whole business of discipline with his ego and feelings.

Here are some suggestions for principals who confront problems such as these:

1. Be patient; it may take new teachers a year or more to learn how to handle discipline problems. Resist the temptation to try to make them operate differently right away. If you rush them, you may inadvertently turn them into old-line autocrats.
2. Let these teachers know—gently—that they have a problem and that you know it.
3. Open up frequent opportunities for informal, relaxed talks with them—maybe over a cup of coffee, maybe in the parking lot after school.
4. Be friendly, sympathetic, and emotionally supportive, not reproachful. Let these teachers

know that every teacher worth his salt experiences some failures. Seek out things to compliment them about.

5. Invite beginners who are having trouble to use you as a resource, to call you in, or to send children to you. On occasion, if they like the idea, take over their classes. (In English elementary schools this is a common practice and seems to work well.) You can be a good crutch for beginning teachers to lean on while they're learning how to walk.

6. If you have any training in nondirective counseling, try to help the beginner identify emotional hang-ups that may interfere with his dealing with the problem. As well as not knowing much about the governance task, many beginners still have adolescent antiauthority feelings and identify unconsciously with rebellious students.

7. Try to avoid telling a teacher what he should do, but suggest many possibilities for him to consider.

8. Try to help out the teacher with a specific problem or a particular student.

9. Try to cut down the pressures and frustrations in the beginning teacher's life.

10. Do almost anything you can to keep experienced teachers from putting pressure on the beginners. Encourage the experienced teachers to be patient, sympathetic, supportive, and helpful toward their beginning colleagues.

11. Arrange for the beginner to visit the classes of, or to team teach with, other teachers who might help — teachers whom you choose for their skill and with whom the beginner says he feels rapport.

12. Arrange for inservice education on discipline, anything from recommending readings to a full-dress workshop on contingent reinforcement techniques.

EXPERIENCED TEACHERS WITH DISCIPLINE PROBLEMS

Experienced teachers who have problems with governance often have extricated themselves from their early difficulties by developing restrictive and punitive habits. By dint of continuous effort, they are able to preserve from day to day an uneasy order, probably at the cost of arousing deep resentment and sowing seeds of later rebellion, not to mention producing injurious educational side effects. Partly because their training gave them so little in the way of professional skills, and their school districts give them so little in the way of resources for governing, most experienced teachers have come to rely heavily on influence measures that are very personal — smiles, glares, and the bestowing and withdrawing of affection or contempt. They have engaged their personal emotions so deeply in keeping order that their self-respect has come to hang on their success or failure, and they have come to view disciplinary offenses as disrespect or personal attack. They have never learned to see the tasks of governance as objective, professional tasks, which can be explored calmly and without defensiveness. Some have, in fact, fallen into an all-or-nothing state of mind. They fear that if students get away with a single violation, the whole structure of law and order in the classroom or school will collapse. "Either you have the children's respect or you don't," they may say. "Either you have control or you don't." Their view of their power as monolithic adds to their fears.

It is understandable that when another person raises questions about their disciplinary practices, many experienced teachers show evidence of feeling emotionally threatened. Probably because the measures they now use

are those with which they rescued themselves from their unpleasant early experiences (and they are never quite sure they may not fall back into that snake pit), they tend to cling to them and to be very reluctant to discard them or try other approaches. They often openly show their displeasure over beginning teachers' attempts to be more liberal or less punitive. This experience of a young fifth-grade teacher is a common one: "I feel I handle my class in such a way that most discipline problems don't crop up. But it does seem that faculty meetings and lounge confrontations always end up with someone telling me that one of my kids did such-and-such."

Experienced teachers tend to be particularly cautious about revealing their disciplinary failures or perplexities to their colleagues or to the principal. They seem to put up a front to one another, with the remarkable result (revealed in research studies) that each tends to think the other stricter and tougher than he really is. So each tends to conceal his own disciplinary problems or his more lenient views from the other and, since he usually attaches great importance to being in the principal's good graces, from the principal, too. Compared to other professions, in fact, teaching has been shown to be an unusually lonely one, and that loneliness must be particularly painful for those who have chosen teaching because of their love of people.[2]

For many teachers, concealing their perplexities leads to denying that they exist. Although experienced teachers complain about discipline problems a great deal, their complaints are usually not about problems concerning their own professional practice, but about the difficulties they have to cope with. Starting off in a workshop or course on governance, experienced teachers usually want to talk at length about the objectionable behavior and poor family backgrounds of their children, but not about new or different approaches they themselves might take.

Here are some suggestions for principals who want to see a change in the behavior of overly authoritarian teachers:

1. Be patient. It may take a couple of years for these teachers to change, and a few never can. Resist the temptation to try to make them change, which will probably just make them more rigid.
2. Let these teachers know—gently, even casually, but clearly—that for professional reasons you yourself favor more freedom for students and influence measures that are more educational, and that you are willing to put up with the resulting increase in noise and disorder.
3. Try to identify fears and points of frustration and irritation in these teachers' disciplinary world (for example, "Kids are insolent" or "Parents don't train kids to respect authority") and use them as the starting points for informal or formal inservice education in regard to discipline and freedom.
4. Try to convince these teachers that tight control of children's lives prevents them from developing self-reliance and self-control and that there can still be law and order even if school norms become more liberal, less punitive influence measures are used, and students are involved more in classroom and school governance.

BEGINNERS AND THE EXPERIENCED

It holds true for both beginners and experienced teachers that they often fear that they are unable to keep order, fear disorderly stu-

dents themselves for the trouble they can cause, and fear the harsh judgments of their colleagues and principals.

Because fear breeds defensiveness and, in turn, aggressiveness toward students, many teachers are caught in a vicious circle. However, because so many of the more effective influence measures depend on the teacher's having a high good-will rating or the ability to communicate intimately with students, a teacher who is uptight about discipline cannot be very effective at it. This makes the process of extricating himself from the vicious circle particularly hard. Most important, the teacher is incapable of looking at the matter calmly and openly as simply another and particularly challenging aspect of playing the professional role of teacher.

Generally, then, the most useful single thing one can do for a teacher who has discipline problems of any kind is to help him relax about them, let him blow off steam, and give him quiet, friendly, emotional support, withholding—for a while at least—any judgment on his performance. When the teacher seems relaxed enough to be open to a serious look at any aspect of his problem, the best point at which to start is the particular point, central or peripheral, that seems most sore to him. Another approach is to tell the teacher some things that may help him: let him know that almost everyone has disciplinary problems; that no one will be upset if he doesn't master his right away; that the principal's standards and those of other teachers are not as restrictive as he thinks. Ordinarily, the worst thing a principal can do is to reproach such a teacher or moralize to him about his beliefs or practices.

Particularly in the case of beginning teachers, relieving pressures on them and giving them time is essential if one wants to improve their chances of learning how to keep order by positive means and avoid their falling into the addictive habit of keeping it by restrictive and punitive means.

One can also help teachers by giving them substantive information they don't have about the students, the school's customs, the regulations and laws that apply to them and to students, and the resources at their disposal. One can help them learn and think analytically about norms and influence measures as such, which may immunize them against the all-or-nothing mentality of some experienced teachers.

If one informs teachers about how many kinds of influence measures there are, they will have more strings to their bow and not be so worried if one should break. And if they recognize the realistic possibilities and limitations, they may be more able to say to students, as skilled teachers often do, "I can't *make* you do such-and-such, but I *can* do thus-and-so." It may be a great service to help a teacher see the advantage of being this honest with children—and to help him learn how to be.

One may help the teacher analyze specific situations: What is the highest priority need in this particular case? What kind of efficacy is most important? What kinds of power does the teacher have, and what kind is he using? What does he do that increases or decreases his power? Do the norms need revising? It is an art to be honest with a nervous teacher about such matters without making him more nervous.

One may be able to help the teacher develop new options or approaches. Perhaps one can suggest that he take more—or less—time in class for governance matters. Perhaps one

merely needs to tell him to speak louder, or to use the imperative mood, or to do more commending, praising, or ignoring. Perhaps he needs to be taught how to teach better or needs to be told to teach something different. Perhaps one can help him balance the effort he puts into remedial measures with more effort on prophylactic ones. If all goes well, one can help the teacher develop an effective style that is consistent with good professional practice yet suits his own personality, a style that can become, to a considerable degree, intuitive. Principals have some special handicaps that go along with their helping role, however, as well as some special resources.

GIVING EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

Almost invariably, a principal is an emotional threat to his or her teachers. This is so not only because he is their administrative superordinate and has formal, bureaucratic powers over them, but also, usually, because he or she has many subtle powers over them that may be easily used or abused. Since teaching is a lonely profession, and since teachers are usually as aware of the nearby presence of the principal as they are of anyone else in the building, many teachers depend emotionally on their principals' personal favor—no one wants the feeling of being in the doghouse. This favor a principal may easily withhold or withdraw, perhaps unconsciously, but nonetheless with effect.

Principals have the power to do little things that can make teachers' lives more comfortable or less so, such as requiring the advance filing of lesson plans, observing, criticizing, intruding into teachers' spheres, and obtaining (or not obtaining) clerical services, supplies, or funds that teachers want. Principals, usually pretty much on their own, make up teachers' assignments, including assignments to special duties, and hand out prerogatives and small privileges, like permission to leave school early. They recommend to their higher-ups the renewal or nonrenewal of contracts, the grooming of certain teachers for advancement, or the transferring of teachers to other schools, preferred ones and less desirable ones.

Finally, and often most important, principals are in a position to back teachers up or not back them up in any conflicts they may have with students, parents, or others. This is a matter to which teachers attach great importance.

How can principals, who themselves constitute an emotional threat to teachers, meet the urgent need to relieve the emotional pressures on teachers? They can do so partly by keeping hands off, by avoiding anything that will make teachers feel emotionally more insecure, ashamed, embarrassed, or guilty; and partly by giving emotional support—compliments, praise and encouragement are among the principal's most useful tools. Where formal classroom observation may make a situation worse, informal stopping by to help can provide support. Patiently tolerating a lot of disorder will relieve the pressure when a teacher is wrestling with the problem of keeping order, or when the teacher still has to learn that he must wrestle with it.

One principal, having ordered an end to corporal punishment and thereby panicking the teachers, simply invited the teachers to send their behavior problems to the office. During a period in which the teachers provided her with a lot of business—most of it unnecessary—they developed new norms and new compliance approaches. She had helped

them to grow professionally, supporting them during the process.

It may make all the difference to the effectiveness of a principal-teacher conference if it can take place casually in an informal setting, perhaps over lunch, or at least out of the bureaucratic environment of the school office. (The furniture and decor of the office, by the way, can either advertise the principal's status and make him more fearsome to visitors or can welcome visitors as social equals and help them relax.)

Where principals themselves are under pressure to put pressure in turn on teachers, sharing this fact with the teachers may build mutually sympathetic, "we're in the same boat" feelings.

Best of all probably, a principal can help teachers emotionally by letting them get to know him as a person. He can come out from behind the "Mr." or "Ms.," saving that title for larger meetings where formal roles must be played. Principals can let teachers see them wrestling with their own doubts, their own problems and mistakes. They can disagree, argue, and retreat openly, banter with teachers and students, wear informal clothes, and in general set aside their official status and relate warmly to people.

One thing that principals, however well trained, cannot do for teachers in their own schools is to give them real psychotherapy. An administrative superordinate and his subordinate simply cannot establish the necessary professional-client relationship.

OTHER WAYS OF HELPING

There are other effective ways for principals to help teachers.

It may be that the principal himself should not, or for some reason cannot, give a teacher the various kinds of support and suggestions that have been discussed. This is one of many reasons why principals would do well to consider obtaining help from other teachers for teachers who need to talk about their concerns. In most school staffs, there is hardly any constructive lateral communication about professional matters. By facilitating and promoting such communication, a principal can get the faculty helping one another—to everyone's profit.

Because he has access to the faculty and inevitably has power over it, a principal is in a good position to influence teachers to reduce their pressure on colleagues. When a well-respected principal makes it clear that he wants other teachers to give Ms. Jones or Mr. Brown a break, he is likely to get his way. Principals can also protect the teachers from higher-ups.

If a teacher who needs help is secure enough, the principal or a fellow teacher may equip himself to provide better assistance by visiting him in his classroom or elsewhere in the school when he's dealing with students. An observer can make notes, mental or written, on what the students do or don't do, what the teacher does or doesn't do, and how the students respond. Possibly he can make an audio- or a videotape of what goes on, which will afford the teacher valuable perspective. Because they have access to the whole staff, principals are often the best people to arrange for one teacher to visit another's classes; for more skilled and better respected teachers to conduct inservice sessions on a one-to-one basis or in discussion or study groups, formally or informally; and for the faculty to meet and share feelings and ideas, a process that should often go on with an administrator present.

Where misinformation or poor communica-

tion is a problem, principals can put teachers and students to work drawing up schoolwide statements of students' obligations and rights.

Principals can use their prerogative of making assignments—of both teachers and students—to help teachers who are having trouble. A principal can take particularly difficult children off a teacher's hands, either within the classroom or elsewhere, for anywhere from a few minutes to the whole year. In most schools they can arrange for study rooms where rambunctious children may be temporarily isolated.

Principals can protect teachers from angry parents and act as a go-between. Many parents are greatly bothered by disciplinary practices they view as bad—too restrictive, too lax, or just unfair to their own children. Without passing judgment or burning his bridges, a principal can give a teacher a lot of protection by saying something like this to parents: "You may be right, but Ms. Jones is the teacher, and she has to use her own best professional judgment. If you think she's wrong, you should talk to her yourself. Then, if you aren't satisfied, all three of us can get together." He should, of course, let the teacher know that this is the position he takes.

Principals can suggest readings that may help teachers. They can also draw on resources from outside the school. They can arrange for consultants, chosen with the advice of teachers, to meet with teachers for work on problems that the teachers themselves have identified. Sometimes they can obtain teacher aides, paid or unpaid. Usually they can arrange for specialized help for children who may need it —though they should avoid invasions of privacy, such as pressuring students or parents to seek psychological, medical, or religious help against their will.

Because he is the immediate administrative superordinate, the principal is the best person to interpret to teachers authoritatively the official limits within which they have to work.

The principal must constantly expand his repertoire of ways to help teachers with their governance tasks. As we have stated several times before, the principal's role is the key to the governance program. If he does not play his role effectively, the governance program could be a shambles.

NOTES

1. For an account of the fate of a number of unrealistic beginning teachers, see Gerald Levy, *Ghetto School* (New York: Pegasus, 1970).
2. A helpful analysis of this situation is provided in Seymour B. Sarason, *The Culture of the School and the Problem of Change* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1971).

Talking with Students When There Has Been Trouble

In most elementary schools, sending or bringing students to the office when they have failed to comply with norms is a standard procedure. This is the commonest way for principals to be drawn into the process of bringing about compliance. Indeed, principals can deliberately offer teachers the option of sending children to the office as a device to relieve the teachers of pressure.

Principals deal with children sent to their offices in different ways.

Some principals make the encounter into an automatic punishment, or the first step of what will lead automatically to punishment. By so doing, they allow teachers to cast them in the role of executioner, regardless of whether the teacher is right or wrong, regardless of what is best for the student, and regardless of the principal's own preferences and the effects on his image. Once a principal is cast in this role, teachers are inclined to count on what happens in his office to intimidate the student adequately. If it doesn't, they tend to be irritated with the principal for not backing them up. Yet it is unjust, and in a sense contrary to law, for a principal to accept unquestioningly, and act on, a teacher's verdict of guilty. If he takes that position, the practical consequences for discipline may be serious. He becomes a bogeyman, which increases his fearsomeness, but destroys his good-will rating; teachers' mistakes go uncorrected and may well be magnified; and about the only visible lesson the student learns is that teachers and principals are likely to behave in unpleasant ways.

On the other hand, a principal can deal with trips to his office as professional referrals to be handled on *his* terms. Ordinarily, this means he will use the visit as the occasion for a conference with the student. While it may sometimes be disadvantageous to leave the teacher out, it may also be an advantage. A student

who has serious problems with a teacher is not likely to talk so frankly in the teacher's presence.

When the principal uses the visit as an occasion for a three-way conference or one involving still more people, he tends naturally and appropriately to fall into the role of chairman or moderator. It is he who sees that everyone gets to say his piece, who helps each person understand what the other's real concern is, and who most likely proposes any next steps or invites suggestions. At the end of the conference, he may change roles and become the final judge. Conferences of this kind take time and patience, but they give the principal an opportunity to deal with the student in a way that is fair both to him and to the teacher.

Some principals provide space in or near their offices as a cooling-off place for students who have been sent out of their classroom. To insist that a child cool off is not necessarily to punish him; when he interprets it as it is meant, it usually helps him to reconsider the situation and his behavior in it without damaging side effects.

Whatever procedures a principal follows, he can obviously help the teacher by making clear to him ahead of time what it means to the principal to receive a student who has been sent to his office. It is extremely important that teachers understand the role the principal will play in the discipline process. If teachers and principal are not in agreement or do not understand each other, problems will be magnified.

Here are some specific suggestions for principals concerning the handling of students whom teachers send or bring to the office:

1. Make it clear to the secretarial staff that serving as a referral point is one of the office's regular functions; involve the staff in handling this function as satisfactorily as possible.

2. Try to arrange your office so that someone sent to see you is not easily visible to a passerby or even, if this can be worked out, to other visitors to the office.

3. Make the physical setting for conferences as informal and unthreatening as possible. Sit at a coffee table, perhaps. Often it's best, especially if the teacher is included in the conference, to meet in a less imposing atmosphere than the office—possibly outdoors or in the cafeteria.

4. Don't try to give a troubled child psychotherapy that goes any deeper than sympathetically helping him to think about whether his behavior is producing results that he really finds satisfactory, and, if not, what alternatives he might be able, and might want, to adopt.

5. If you are meeting alone with a student who has been charged with an offense and denies it, hear him out. Let him know that you have reason to suspect he's guilty but that you are still open-minded on the subject, since teachers and even principals make mistakes. Try to understand what he says from *his* point of view—as you would want *your* position understood if *you* were charged with an offense.

6. If the teacher and the child are in on the conference, try to create the kind of atmosphere suggested in such an opening statement as this, "We've all three of us got a serious problem, and we have to find a solution that will work and will be fair to everybody. We're all sensible people, and most likely we'll succeed." Use the same friendly, businesslike approach to both the child and the teacher, just as a judge uses the same approach to prosecuting attorney and defendant.

7. If the teacher or the student becomes emotional, stay calm. Don't show your feel-

ings; be patient; don't attack or defend; when there is a moment of calm, try to suggest something constructive.

8. If the child is suspected or accused of an offense that is not serious and there is a question about his guilt, you may want to schedule a conference for later and let him go back to his room. If the charge is serious, you may want to keep him on ice (for example, cooling his heels in the office or in a study hall or time-out room) until something further can be done.

9. If it develops that the child has violated a rule or requirement because he thinks it is unfair or stupid, try to explain to him that no matter what its merits are, so long as the rule is in effect you and the teacher have no choice but to see that it is obeyed. If there is any case to be made against it, invite the student to open up the question and tell him how to do so.

10. If it is definite that the student has committed an offense, don't reproach him for doing what he did, but emphasize that you can't tolerate further such behavior. Ask him to come up with his own plan for avoiding a repetition unless he wants you to come up with one.

11. Be as open as you possibly can about the child's suggestions. If he suggests that you pardon him, don't rule out giving it a try; if he suggests doing away right then and there with the rule he broke or transferring him to another class, that just *might* be the ideal solution. Specific ways of dealing with serious offenses will be discussed in a later chapter.

12. Make a real effort to come up with a plan of action acceptable to the child. If you can't, tell him that, right or wrong, this is simply the way it's going to have to be—at least for now.

TALKING WITH A STUDENT ALONE

Talking with a student alone, whether it is done by the principal, a teacher, or possibly an understanding fellow student, may be on the whole the most useful single disciplinary measure that can be taken. This section discusses some of the approaches likely to be effective in such a talk, whether it is a formal conference or a chat initiated casually by one or another of the people involved. What is said here is directed primarily to principals, but it should be helpful to teachers, too. Much of it applies, too, to talking with students in groups, which is perhaps the second most useful approach to discipline.

It is through talking that most of the procedures that change children's views of the situations they confront can be put to work with the greatest effect—teaching about possibilities, pointing to future benefits, stimulating children to think, quasi-psychotherapy, and discussions of right and wrong. And, for practical reasons, these procedures are somewhat more likely to function in a private talk than in a group discussion.

We often speak of "talking to" a student, by which we probably mean moralizing, scolding, or reprimanding. Whether or not they are so intended, these kinds of talk are verbal punishments. The kind of talk meant here is talking *with* the child; in other words, two-way dialogue.

When a principal or teacher engages in a dialogue with a student about a matter of behavior, he plays two roles: that of a law enforcer and that of an educator-helper who has set aside his authority for the moment and is trying to help the student figure out a way he can live satisfactorily in the world of law and order. Neither role is always easy, and

because they tend to interfere with one another, combining them is hard. Yet, so far as the situation calls for both roles, the school official must play both. If he refuses to play the first, he is derelict in his governance duty; if he refuses to play the second, he is abdicating his role as an educator.

Both principals and teachers are under so much more pressure to keep order than to educate that the danger of failing to meet one's governance obligations is usually small compared to the danger of failing to be an educator-helper. In any case, the double responsibility requires one to gravitate back and forth between the two roles.

The success of a conference depends heavily, of course, on honest communication from child to principal or teacher. Since this can take place only in the child's own language, the adult can get candid communication only to the extent that he tolerates that language. Also, since communication will take place only insofar as it is rewarded, the adult can enhance its quality and quantity by showing an interest in, or appreciation of, the whole communication, regardless of its content. This may be hard. One must put aside for a few minutes one's feelings of obligation to brand evil as evil and to teach what's right or wrong and, instead, appear to accept fully language, views, or statements one might find repugnant.

Conversely, communication will not happen if any distress that the principal or teacher feels about the content of the communication is allowed to become too closely identified with the communication itself. The listener may forestall this possibility by explicitly commending the act of communicating itself, while deploring the content. For instance, he can say, "If you feel that way, I'm awfully glad you told me," or "Well, you've got yourself into a heck of a mess, haven't you, but I admire your courage for telling me about it." Or he can receive the communication impassively, hold back his negative response, wait a few hours before responding to the content, and then begin by saying, "I've been thinking about what you said to me this morning."

It is always possible in a confidential talk that communication will go so well that the principal or teacher learns some secrets the child doesn't expect to have passed on. Such a situation may arouse the law enforcer role. To keep the conference fair and honest, therefore, it is a good idea, before the child gets himself in too deep, to warn him which kinds of secrets the school official is not at liberty to keep: "Before you say any more, I should warn you that if you tell me anything that has to do with drugs, I can't promise to keep it a secret."

If the student is violently defiant or rude, it is most effective to show no anger but intimate that the matter will have to be dealt with later. (One may have to make several attempts before one gets a dialogue going; occasionally, it's impossible for someone who isn't a trained therapist to do so.) When a student behaves this way, it may help to keep reminding oneself that such behavior is almost always a defensive symptom of a person who is basically very frightened.

To sum up, then, communication is likely to work best when one manages to listen with the appearance of patience and sympathy, postponing all expression of disapproval or shock.

With communication working, the next requirement of an effective conference, as has been suggested earlier, is that the principal or teacher come to understand how the situation or event looks from the student's point of view and how it feels to him. A good test of whether

one has accomplished this is whether one can say back to the student successfully, "Then, as you see it, things are this way, . . ." which is harder than it sounds. Another test is to be able to say to oneself honestly that, if one were in the student's shoes, one might feel and do the same as he.

This sort of approach achieves two things. It tells the student that the principal or teacher is interested in helping him, not in reproaching, shaming, or humiliating him. Thus, it opens his mind to the questions, information, or suggestions that the principal or teacher advances. And, because it teaches the adult how the student sees the situation, it equips him to choose the questions he might ask or comments he might make that would modify that perception and thus modify the student's behavior.

If the school official avoids any temptation to fall into the other error—seeming to excuse unacceptable behavior—he can communicate to the student honestly what must be changed about his behavior. Separating out the behavior, which the principal or teacher of course rejects, from the student himself, whom he accepts ("That certainly was your worst side that got the better of you, Stan, wasn't it?") can strengthen the student's self-respect; that is, his belief that there is nothing basically wrong about him or his most fundamental goals and that he has the ability to find new ways of pursuing them. The student must recognize this if he is to become intelligently self-directing. Making the needed changes may be difficult for him, especially if those changes are major. It will be most helpful if the principal or teacher makes it clear that the choice is not simply between continuing in his old ways and straightening out all at once; he has the alternative of modifying his behavior bit by bit. The school official may have to accept this last alternative, for it is probably the best the student can do to improve. It has been shown to be very helpful, even with hardened delinquents, to ask each one to make a small commitment and, when he has made it, to do what one can both to help him keep it and to insist that he do so.[1] This is what it means to build self-discipline. Since the influence procedures involved are inclined to be slow acting, it may take many conferences; when these procedures produce effects, however, the effects are persistent.

The best format for a conference depends on the circumstances. Most often the child is anxious and fearful (or he is sullen and defiant, which suggests that he is fearful), and he is almost invariably so when the conference is with the principal. In these cases, as was suggested above, an informal setting, even a casual one, is likely to be the best. Much good work has been done in a seemingly offhand way. A principal "happens" to be standing near the child on the playground, and after talking about what's going on in the game they're watching, he changes the subject with some such remark as, "Say, by the way, didn't Mr. Jones tell me that you and he had a little trouble the other day?"

An article in the *National Elementary Principal* some time ago gave some useful specific suggestions—almost a scenario—for a more formal, "sympathetic, nonjudgmental, and objective approach." Among the suggestions were the following:

> The guiding principle in conducting the interview should be: the child is better than his act. It is vital that the child feel that it is the unfortunate behavior which is being reprimanded, and not he as an individual.
>
> Throughout the interview, the incident of mis-

> behavior should be viewed as a mutual problem to be solved and worked out between the youngster and the principal . . .
>
> Structure the interview so the pupil can assume some portion of the responsibility for the conduct of the interview. The pupil's participation has two beneficial results—it stimulates self-evaluation and limits negative reactions . . .
>
> . . . The principal may present to the student for exploration possible alternate courses of action. . . .[2]

With older students who have lived in tough circumstances and have learned to be tough themselves, a very straightforward approach may work best, with the principal or teacher arguing back, even shouting back, just as the students expect their best friends to do.

In the rare case that a student is really happy-go-lucky about the trouble he causes or gets himself into, it may take a formal confrontation in the principal's office, with the principal sitting behind his desk and the student standing, to get across to him how serious the situation has become But this probably won't work if its effect is so great as to intimidate the student.

The question whether or not one should explain to children the reasons for the norms and requirements they are asked to live up to is often argued. While it is sometimes dangerous to do this with a large, restless group—several children may get the idea that there is enough dissidence to warrant a revolution—in a face-to-face talk with a single child, explaining can only be beneficial. If the explainer is clear in his mind about his own view of the requirement's purpose and is honest about it with the child, the explanation itself will almost certainly be effective as an influence measure. If the explainer regards the requirement as unnecessary, he can try explaining the rule itself: "Mr. X, who made the rule, probably thought it would help to. . . ." Or he can explain why he has to enforce it: "Look, I'm not saying that this is a good rule; I'm saying the school board made it, and I have to see that you follow it." Or he might change the requirement then and there: "OK, if you can think of a way to straighten this out without doing what I've told you to do, it'll be fine with me." If the student comes up with a convincing argument against the requirement, the principal or teacher is likely to gain more than he loses by giving in. "OK, you're right," he can say. "That's using your head. Forget what I said before. It's good to have someone like you around to straighten me out sometimes!"

NOTES

1. William Glasser, *Schools Without Failure* (New York: Harper and Row, 1968).
2. Robert J. Baldauf and Wilbur O. Carthey, "When Johnny Is Sent to the Office," *National Elementary Principal* 42 (November 1962): 57-58.

Dealing with Major Offenses

In most elementary schools, serious offenses rarely occur. But in any school they may, and in some they are, unfortunately, common. Carrying weapons, extortion, theft, use of hard drugs, and arson are facts of life. Serious property damage, serious defiance or rudeness, obscene language under some conditions, and unauthorized leaving of the room or the school fall into the same category.

The main governance reason for responding to a serious offense is to see that it comes to an end and is not repeated. In the case of theft or property damage, school authorities also have an obligation to try to arrange for restoration or reparation. Usually such offenses call for measures that are high in reliability, and some call for measures that are quick acting. Persistence of effect is desirable, but it is not of the highest priority. Paying a considerable cost for effectiveness is justified, and, depending partly on the seriousness of the offense, damaging side effects may have to be accepted.

Here are some suggestions for both teachers and principals:

1. When the offense entails a continuing danger (for example, brandishing a weapon), move fast to end it, getting help if it seems useful.
2. In a case of theft, put a high priority on getting the stolen object out of the thief's hands—even at the cost of not identifying him.
3. Ignore or overlook a serious offense only rarely, and only if you decide that on balance it's best—for instance, if you can't figure out a way to solve a crime or if you're willing for the norm that has been violated to become a less important one.
4. If you don't know who committed an offense, don't accuse anyone until you have evidence beyond a reasonable doubt that he's guilty of it; remember that you're not only an

investigator but also, very likely, judge and jury.

5. Collect evidence by subtle, nonaccusing questions when you can.

6. Never encourage one student to tell on another except when there is danger of injury or when the rule is one that students themselves have instituted or, by sincerely ratifying it, have made their own.

7. Solve a crime if you can, but remember, you don't *have* to. Lots of school offenses go unsolved, yet life goes on.

8. When the classroom or school community will profit from an offender admitting to you that he committed the offense, invite, encourage, or even urge him to do so, and then reward him. Don't extort confessions for the purpose of justifying a punishment or for use in a court of law—they're inadmissible.

9. If a child seems to have challenged you by obeying only in part, focus attention on what he *has* done, commend him for it explicitly or implicitly, and make it rewarding for him; avoid making a big issue out of what he still hasn't done. If you have feelings about disrespect for your authority, keep them hidden. In that way, you will probably find it easier to get him to do the other part, or you may find you can settle for the part he's already done.

10. If something a child does, such as hurting someone or spoiling something beautiful, angers you, let your anger show, but keep it from turning into personal anger or vindictiveness directed against him. Play your authoritative role coolly: "That's a terrible thing to do, Mary. We just can't have that."

11. Remember that you don't have to complete the process of dealing with an offense right away. Often it's best to delay, keeping the incident alive in the offender's mind (by making an appointment for a conference later, for example) but allowing yourself time and leisure to think things over quietly and perhaps to get advice.

12. Use private conferences as your basic tool for dealing with serious offenses; confer over and over again; don't give up.

13. If a whole group has been somehow involved in an offense or has been affected by it, talk with the group about it; draw out their feelings, share yours with them, and engage them as far as possible in the resultant planning and action.

14. Do almost anything you can to avoid deciding to punish a child. If you feel you have to give in on this, show that you do so reluctantly. ("I hate to punish you for this." "Can you think of any other way I can help you to remember . . . ?" "How about our holding off and seeing if you can . . . ?")

15. If the norm involved is an important one and you think you can show the offender (and the other students) how important it is only by punishing him, do so. Make the punishment tedious, rather than painful, and fairly short-lived. The best punishments are probably the withdrawal of privileges and the assignment of temporary, useful chores that can be performed in private. (Think of recess and extracurricular activities not as privileges but as rights you shouldn't infringe on.)

16. Never hit a child except when he's in the middle of hitting someone else and hitting him is the only way to stop him (which is almost never).

17. Consider the possibility that the best measure is to do nothing, or perhaps merely to let the offender know that you are aware of the offense and perhaps that you know who committed it.

18. If there are explicit regulations as to

what you're supposed to do, obey them—unless you're absolutely convinced you must do otherwise and are willing to face any possible consequences.

19. Send a student to a guidance counselor only if the counselor functions as an assistant administrator or a disciplinarian. If he functions as a therapeutic counselor, do no more than invite or possibly urge the student to go to the counselor on his own.

20. After any serious incident, jot down a private, confidential, anecdotal record of what happened and what you did; let the student concerned know what you put into it.

21. In a very serious or dangerous case, consider a nonpunitive suspension, which means asking the offender to go home or sending him home for the rest of the day or for two or three days, if this is permissible.

22. In a case so serious that a referral outside the school seems advisable, make such a referral only with the knowledge and consent of the student's parents.

When a very grave disciplinary offense has occurred, or when a serious danger threatens that school personnel do not feel sure they can handle, a principal may have to call the police. In one city, at least 20 percent of the calls to the school police unit come from elementary schools (many of them involving intruders, to be sure, rather than students). There is little reason to involve the police in cases of minor violations of the law on the part of students. Isolated episodes of petty theft, ordinary fights, and the like can almost always be dealt with more satisfactorily by school authorities.

Because of the psychologically disruptive effect of a confrontation between a policeman and an elementary school suspect, such a confrontation should be avoided during school hours unless the matter is extremely urgent. For the same reason, some school people believe that whenever policemen come to an elementary school, they should, if possible, be out of uniform. Depending on the situation, this may be debatable. It may be that when a policeman comes to the school, the children are entitled to know it and to have a chance to discuss the event and its implications with one another, with teachers, with the principal, and perhaps with the policeman himself. However, barring a catastrophic emergency, when policemen are in a school, the principal should keep the control of the school in his own hands. If the situation is serious, he might do well to get authorization to send the children home. As long as a police officer is in the school building, a school person should accompany him—particularly while he conducts any search or interrogation or makes an arrest.

Although the law on the subject of school children's rights during police investigations is far from crystallized, students are entitled to the same legal protection, up to a point, as older citizens.[1]

Specialists seem to agree that school personnel should not turn confidential school records over to the police or allow the police to examine them without a valid subpoena or signed instructions to that effect from the child's parents. While a principal himself has the right to search pockets, purses, or lockers when he has specific reason to suspect something is out of order, he would be wise to refuse to allow a policeman to conduct any search without a proper search warrant.

If there are reasons for a policeman to interview students during the school day to gather evidence, this may be done. Their parents should, of course, be informed as soon as

possible. The principal should be present at any interview, should make notes, and should prevent any brow-beating. If the student to be questioned is a suspect, or becomes one, the principal should refuse permission for an interrogation on school premises and should contact the parents as soon as possible. Because the student has the right not to incriminate himself, the outcome of any interrogation carried out by the principal himself is inadmissible in court as evidence.

In dealing with major offenses, one of the tasks the principal must accomplish is to decide which offenses he and his faculty will handle and which offenses are beyond their scope. In the past, school people frequently have attempted to solve problems beyond their competence. For example, teachers and principals are not law enforcement officials. Neither are they generally prepared to deal with children's deep emotional problems. In developing procedures for dealing with major offenses, then, school personnel should make some decisions regarding which problems require outside assistance in some form. Attempting to solve problems one is not equipped to deal with is not only unwise, but it can make the problems worse.

NOTE

1. See William G. Buss, *Legal Aspects of Crime Investigation in the Public Schools*, No. 4 in the NOLPE Monograph Series (Topeka: National Organization on Legal Problems of Education, 1971).

Toward a Governance Program

A governance program begins and ends with human beings. Its success depends on how the people who administer the program—students, teachers, and principal—perceive each other. If there is mutual trust and respect among all the people in the school, the governance program has every chance of achieving its objectives. If trust and respect are absent, student governance will be a constant uphill struggle.

Children come to the elementary school from various backgrounds and experiences. They will have a variety of needs and desires; some common, many different. They will exhibit a potpourri of sizes, shapes, and hues. They are, in a sense, the *givens* in the elementary school. It is the task of the professional to work with the pupils, at whatever stage of development they might be, to develop the kind of atmosphere that will lead to a sound, effective governance program.

It is the responsibility of the professional to establish a school climate based upon trust and respect for each human being in the school. This cannot be done through tricks or the learning of techniques, except at a very superficial, and eventually self-defeating, level. A successful governance program, then, begins first with a school staff who sincerely believes in people as human beings, who, if you will, genuinely like kids. Not every teacher or principal employed in elementary schools today meets this test. Such persons, wherever they may be, are weak links in the governance of pupils. They are the people who are constantly seeking new tricks to control children or who so easily fall into authoritarian patterns of behavior and seek to master kids.

Respecting and caring for children as human beings does not mean a syrupy, permissive kind of school atmosphere in which everything goes, and usually does. When one genuinely

cares for a human being, he wants to see him grow and to achieve all that he can. This means one has to guide that person, even to correct him when he is wrong. But one guides and corrects always with the knowledge and understanding that the other person is just that, a person, who has the inherent dignity of a human being and to whom one owes respect, regardless of the immediate situation.

The principal, and to some extent, all the teachers in the school, must seek colleagues who exhibit behaviorally the characteristics of people who like and want to work with kids. A professional staff who are interested in all children, both the good and the troublesome, and who are sensitive to children's basic needs, regardless of their backgrounds, can provide an invaluable underpinning for the governance program.

A second consideration in the governance program is the legal foundation. The majority of court decisions in this area have dealt with cases in colleges and secondary schools. However, the principles laid down by the courts in those cases also apply to elementary schools. Every principal should be aware of the significant court decisions dealing with pupil governance.

Understandably, school personnel in recent years have become concerned over the number of court cases that students have won, apparently at the expense of the schools. An objective analysis of those legal decisions would reveal that in many instances schools were extremely vulnerable on the kinds of rules they were attempting to enforce and the processes they were using to carry out the rules. School personnel should not fear reversal in court so long as they follow two basic principles. The first is that everyone is entitled to due process of law. That is, each person, regardless of circumstances, is entitled to fair play. Due process is not a static concept; it varies with specific conditions. Expulsion requires an elaborate procedure; a mild punishment for a minor offense does not. The point to remember, the question to be asked in each case is, has the child been treated fairly?

A second principle is that underlying every rule should be a rationale related to the educational process. No one would argue that point. Still, schools have lost a significant number of court cases precisely because they could not respond to the question "why" when a rule was challenged. Courts, always reluctant to interfere with school authorities, have not overturned school rules when there was a logical basis for them. This implies fewer rules, but rules that are really necessary. It also suggests a governance program easier to administer.

A third aspect of a governance program is the role of the principal. As suggested in an earlier chapter, the principal is a significant figure in establishing the climate of the school. The principal's attitude and, more important, his behavior, will have a great deal to do not only with the structure of the governance program, but also its effectiveness. How the principal himself conducts his relationships with faculty, youngsters, and parents will have an impact on the school's atmosphere. An administrator cannot realistically *impose* a democratic governance program. Neither can he expect one to develop if he behaves in an authoritarian manner. In other words, a principal can only expect what he himself is willing to accept as a part of his own leadership style, expressed in behavioral terms.

Fourth, it perhaps is axiomatic to state again that students can play a significant role in developing a governance program. Nevertheless, it is well worth repeating that today's

youngster's are much more able than yesterday's to assume responsibilities in this area. It is the school's task to provide children with those responsibilities commensurate with their maturity, always striving to encourage students to accept more. The more students are able to govern themselves, the less adults have to impose order.

Parents, too, have a part to play in the governance program. Schools need to communicate with parents in a variety of ways, and beyond traditional means, such as PTA meetings, in order to inform parents of the purposes of the governance program. Parents' advice and desires also can be used in the development of the program. In a real sense, the school can move only as far as its patrons understand and support its practices.

Finally, in an effective elementary school discipline program that fully respects children's interests and rights, the principal and the teachers—with the help of the students, the parents, and others—establish rules for behavior on the basis of objective governance and educational considerations, taking into account, however, the extent of the staff's and the children's readiness.

The principal and the teachers are not uptight about order and quiet, but aim for the objectively optimum ratios of freedom to order and noise to quiet. While the governance program is realistic for the students as they are, the school is always striving hard toward more liberal requirements for each individual student, up to the point where only absolutely necessary rules remain. The school is always pushing for greater involvement of the student with other students as a group in the school's governance, both in setting instrumental rules and requirements and selecting and taking measures for producing compliance.

Everyone in the school knows the existing rules and expectations and their relative importance, and the principal and the teachers work stubbornly to bring about compliance with every rule. The students are afforded substantial and continual opportunity in class meetings, committees, councils, and the like, to determine their own conduct, individually in some matters and collectively in others. Threats and punishments are seldom used, and when they are, they are of such a nature that they don't deeply engage the emotions of either the punisher or the student.

The principal keeps the somewhat contradictory roles he plays in proper balance. As a broker in ideas and communications, he works to get all members of the school engaged in a more or less continuous dialogue about the students' behavior, about how limits on that behavior can be broached, and about how students can come to be more fully involved in regulating their own behavior, either as free individuals or as members of self-governing groups. He does this regardless of how good or bad the discipline in the school appears to be.

The principal and the teachers try to be as open as possible with students, and the principal is as open as possible with the teachers about their personal views, biases, doubts, and hang-ups. The whole school experience is as engaging, challenging, rewarding, and ego-building as possible for both students and teachers.

The principal and the teachers ignore, circumvent, resist, or overrule pressures or limitations put on the school by the superintendent or the community that threaten either to infringe on the students' rights or to restrict unduly freedom or their opportunity to learn. At the same time, they try to educate those out-

side the school about the proper regulating of students' behavior and about the importance of freedom and involvement to the success of both governance and education.

The development of an effective governance program is a task that never ends. It is a task that requires the best talents of all the people associated with the school. Done effectively, it can lead to a stronger and better educational program.

Appendix A: A List of Students' Rights

Right of access to an education

Rights to privacy and to be let alone

Right to equal treatment

Right to have injury done by past discrimination redressed

Right to freedom of religion

Rights to freedom of speech, freedom of expression of ideas, and freedom of the press

Right to substantive due process

Right to procedural due process

Right to be presumed innocent

Right to remain silent

Right to be secure from improper searches and seizures

Right not to be punished except as an outcome of a fair procedure

Right to freedom from racial, religious, and sex discrimination

Right not to be subjected to cruel and unusual punishment

Right to be protected against unfair, damaging entries in permanent records

Right to an academic transcript based on achievement.

Appendix B: A Suggested List of Important Elemental Norms for a Public Elementary School

No fighting with weapons

No fighting in places where a fall might be dangerous

No physical assaults

No continuous or serious bullying or harassing of one student by another

No weapons, explosives, or fireworks except in connection with approved school activities

No lighting of fires except in connection with approved school activities

No use or sale of dangerous drugs

No stealing or damaging of other people's property or the school's property

No leaving of school grounds without permission

No serious lying about official school matters

No serious disruption of the formal school program

No indecent behavior or suggestive (as opposed to "bad") language

Students are to be at the places where they are scheduled to be during school hours

Students are to obey the legitimate orders (though not necessarily any improper orders) of those in authority in the school

Students are to make restitution or reparation for injuries they have done—so far as this is practical

Students are to live up to formal agreements made

Students are to conform to necessary housekeeping routines (such as respecting the cafeteria line)

Students are to keep themselves reasonably clean

Students are to dress properly for outdoor or athletic activities.

The list may look long and restrictive, but in the light of the million things students may do in the course of a school year, it is short. There are many other norms that are also elemental but less important.

Appendix C: A List of Basic Influence Procedures

I. Procedures that work primarily through changing the objective physical or social situation

   A. Manipulating cues (e.g., saying "Sit down")

   B. Changing aspects of the situation so as to change appearances as to what options are open to the student (e.g., getting the student's friends to tell him he *is* capable of putting up with a rule he doesn't like; posting a sign announcing that no money should be left in the school overnight)

   C. Eliminating or creating options
      1. Changing the external situation so that the student can or cannot do something (e.g., moving students' chairs apart; getting a student out of the room; locking up money)
      2. Constraining or restraining the student by force (e.g., pinning a furious student to the floor)

   D. Altering the situation so that the cost to the student of engaging in a behavior will be lower or higher
      1. So that engaging in the behavior will be easier or harder for him (e.g., offering to help a student pick up a mess he's supposed to pick up; putting away something one doesn't want the student to play with)
      2. So that the "natural" consequences of engaging in a behavior will be less or more unpleasant for him (e.g., encouraging other students to show—or conceal—their disapproval of something you don't want—or want—the student to do)

   E. Altering the situation so that the "natural" benefits to the student of engag-

ing in a behavior will be higher or lower (e.g., confiscating a ball so that running around will be less fun; instituting a student government that makes coming to school more appealing)

II. Procedures that work more directly to produce a psychological change in the student himself
   A. Doing something to get the student's physiological condition changed (e.g., opening a window; giving a student his prescribed pill)
   B. Teaching the student new competencies (e.g., showing him how to walk away from a fight)
   C. Changing the student's emotional dispositions through a psychotherapeutic technique (e.g., letting a student talk through his anger or frustration about a situation)
   D. Changing what the student believes is true about the situation he faces
      1. Changing what he believes about what's possible for him to do
         a. Giving him information (e.g., information suggesting that trying to avoid doing what is wanted is futile; information that he can get his schedule changed so he can go home with his friend without cutting a class)
         b. Stimulating him to think (e.g., inviting a girl who threatens to beat up another girl to consider whether she really can)
      2. Changing what he believes about the costs various ways of behaving will have in effort and unwanted consequences
         a. Giving him information in such ways as
            i. Prophesying that the costs of the unwanted behavior won't be high (e.g., telling him that he can obey a rule without sacrificing his self-respect)
            ii. Promising to do something to keep the cost of the wanted behavior low (e.g., promising to save a seat at lunch for a student who is supposed to stay behind and clean up)
            iii. Cautioning that the "natural" consequences of the unwanted behavior may be unpleasant (e.g., pointing out that fighting usually leads to trouble)
            iv. Threatening to do something to make the consequences of the unwanted behavior unpleasant
               (1) Threatening in words (e.g., saying, "Much more of that and I may have to keep you after school")
               (2) Appearing to threaten (e.g., glaring or making a show of force by kicking a wastebasket)
               (3) Punishing unwanted behavior when it occurs as a sample of what one may continue or repeat (e.g., reprimanding, reproaching, imposing formal punishment)

b. Stimulating the student to think through for himself the possible costs of different ways of behaving (e.g., engaging him in a nondirective or reality-therapy conference or group discussion)

3. Changing what he believes about the benefits to be gained by various ways of behaving
   a. Giving him information in such ways as
      i. Pointing out benefits to be gained (e.g., saying, "If we can all get settled now, there'll be time afterwards to . . ."; providing an example of enjoyment of benefits)
      ii. Promising or bargaining to do something to make the consequences pleasant
         (1) Promising or bargaining in words (e.g., "If you show you can do a good job on this, I'll let you decide . . .")
         (2) Appearing to promise rewards by making clear one's power and one's general disposition to reward (e.g., smiling; doing favors; turning one's back to show trust)
         (3) Rewarding wanted behavior when it occurs—as a sample of what may be repeated (e.g., praising, complimenting, paying off with tangible benefits or more responsibility)
      iii. Cautioning the student that the benefits of an unwanted behavior he's weighing will be low (e.g., telling a student, "If you do cut class, it won't be any fun, because there's nothing to do")
      iv. Threatening to do something to prevent the consequences of the unwanted behavior from being pleasant (e.g., establishing a precedent for the restitution of stolen property; telling a student, "As long as you keep doing this, I won't tell you. . . .")
   b. Stimulating the student to think through and weigh for himself the possible benefits of different ways of behaving (e.g., engaging him in a nondirective or reality-therapy conference or group discussion)

E. Changing the student's beliefs about right and wrong (e.g., conducting a group discussion of the nature of moral values)

III. Quasi-procedure: taking no action (e.g., waiting for a class to settle down to work by itself).

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